Jo Lumsden

FIFTEEN SERMONS

Preached at the

ROLLS CHAPEL.

To which are added,

SIX SERMONS

Preached on Public Occasions.

By JOSEPH BUTLER, LL.D.
Late Lord Biſhop of Bristol.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

A NEW EDITION CORRECTED.

VOLUME THE FIRST.

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To the right Honourable

Sir JOSEPH JEKYLL,

Maſter of the ROLLS, *etc.*

The following SERMONS, preached in his Chapel, are with all humility dedicated,

BY

his moſt dutiful, and

moſt obedient ſervant,

JOSEPH BUTLER.

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THOUGH it is ſcarce poſſible to avoid judging, in ſome way or other, of almoſt every thing which offers itſelf to one's thoughts; yet it is certain that many perſons, from different cauſes, never exerciſe their judgment, upon what comes before them, in the way of determining whether it be concluſive and holds. They are perhaps entertained with ſome things, not ſo with others; they like and they diſlike: but whether that which is propoſed to be made out, be really made out or not; whether a matter be ſtated according to the real truth of the caſe, ſeems to the generality of people merely a circumſtance of no conſideration at all. Arguments are often wanted for ſome accidental purpoſe:

but proof as ſuch is what they never want for themſelves; for their own ſatisfaction of mind, or conduct in life. Not to mention the multitudes who read merely for the ſake of talking, or to qualify themſelves for the world, or ſome ſuch kind of reaſons; there are, even of the few who read for their own entertainment, and have a real curioſity to ſee what is ſaid, ſeveral, which is prodigious, who have no ſort of curioſity to ſee what is true: I ſay, curioſity; becauſe it is too obvious to be mentioned, how much that religious and ſacred attention, which is due to truth, and to the important queſtion, What is the rule of life, is loſt out of the world.

For the ſake of this whole claſs of readers, for they are of different capacities, different kinds, and get into this way from different occaſions, I have often wiſhed, that it had been the cuſtom to lay before people nothing in matters of argument but premiſes, and leave them to draw concluſions themſelves; which,

though it could not be done in all caſes, might in many.

The great number of books and papers of amuſement, which, of one kind or another, daily comes in one's way, have in part occaſioned, and moſt perfectly fall in with and humour, this idle way of reading and conſidering things. By this means, time even in ſolitude is happily got rid of, without the pain of attention: neither is any part of it more put to the account of idleneſs, one can ſcarce forbear ſaying, is ſpent with leſs thought, than great part of that which is ſpent in reading.

Thus people habituate themſelves to let things paſs through their minds, as one may ſpeak, rather than to think of them. Thus by uſe they become ſatisfied merely with ſeeing what is ſaid, without going any further. Review and attention, and even forming a judgment, becomes fatigue; and to lay any thing before them that requires it, is putting them quite out of their way.

THERE are alſo perſons, and there are at leaſt more of them than have a right to claim ſuch ſuperiority, who take for granted, that they are acquainted with every thing; and that no ſubject, if treated in the manner it ſhould be, can be treated in any manner but what is familiar and eaſy to them.

IT is true indeed, that few perſons have a right to demand attention; but it is alſo true, that nothing can be underſtood without that degree of it, which the very nature of the thing requires. Now morals, conſidered as a ſcience, concerning which ſpeculative difficulties are daily raiſed, and treated with regard to thoſe difficulties, plainly require a very peculiar attention. For here ideas never are in themſelves determinate, but become ſo by the train of reaſoning and the place they ſtand in; ſince it is impoſſible that words can always ſtand for the ſame ideas, even in the ſame author, much leſs in different ones. Hence an argument may not readily be apprehended,

which is different from its being miſtaken; and even caution to avoid being miſtaken may, in ſome caſes, render it leſs readily apprehended. It is very unallowable for a work of imagination or entertainment not to be of eaſy comprehenſion, but may be unavoidable in a work of another kind, where a man is not to form or accommodate, but to ſtate things as he finds them.

It muſt be acknowleged that ſome of the following diſcourſes are very abſtruſe and difficult; or, if you pleaſe, obſcure: but I muſt take leave to add, that thoſe alone are judges, whether or no and how far this is a fault, who are judges, whether or no and how far it might have been avoided—thoſe only who will be at the trouble to underſtand what is here ſaid, and ſee how far the things here inſiſted upon, and not other things, might have been put in a plainer manner; which yet I am far from aſſerting that they could not.

Thus much however will be allowed, that

general criticiſms concerning obſcurity conſidered as a diſtinct thing from confuſion and perplexity of thought, as in ſome caſes there may be ground for them; ſo in others, they may be nothing more at the bottom than complaints, that every thing is not to be underſtood with the ſame eaſe that ſome things are. Confuſion and perplexity in writing is indeed without excuſe, becauſe any one may, if he pleaſes, know whether he underſtands and ſees through what he is about: and it is unpardonable for a man to lay his thoughts before others, when he is conſcious that he himſelf does not know whereabouts he is, or how the matter before him ſtands. It is coming abroad in diſorder, which he ought to be diſſatisfied to find himſelf in at home,

But even obſcurities, ariſing from other cauſes than the abſtruſeneſs of the argument, may not be always inexcuſable. Thus a ſubject may be treated in a manner, which all along ſuppoſes the reader acquainted with what has

been ſaid upon it, both by ancient and modern writers; and with what is the preſent ſtate of opinion in the world concerning ſuch ſubject. This will create a difficulty of a very peculiar kind, and even throw an obſcurity over the whole before thoſe who are not thus informed; but thoſe who are, will be diſpoſed to excuſe ſuch a manner, and other things of the like kind, as a ſaving of their patience.

However upon the whole, as the title of *Sermons* gives ſome right to expect what is plain and of eaſy comprehenſion, and as the beſt auditories are mixt, I ſhall not ſet about to juſtify the propriety of preaching, or, under that title, publiſhing diſcourſes ſo abſtruſe as ſome of theſe are: neither is it worth while to trouble the reader with the account of my doing either. He muſt not however impute to me, as a repetition of the impropriety, this ſecond edition*, but to the demand for it.

* The preface ſtands exactly as it did before the ſecond edition of the ſermons.

WHETHER he will think he has any amends made him, by the following illuſtrations of what ſeemed moſt to require them, I myſelf am by no means a proper judge.

THERE are two ways in which the ſubject of morals may be treated. One begins from enquiring into the abſtract relations of things: the other from a matter of fact, namely, what the particular nature of man is, its ſeveral parts, their oeconomy or conſtitution; from whence it proceeds to determine what courſe of life it is, which is correſpondent to this whole nature. In the former method the concluſion is expreſſed thus, that vice is contrary to the nature and reaſon of things: in the latter, that it is a violation or breaking in upon our own nature. Thus they both lead us to the ſame thing, our obligations to the practice of virtue; and thus they exceedingly ſtrengthen and enforce each other. The firſt ſeems the moſt direct formal proof, and in

ſome reſpects the leaſt liable to cavil and diſpute: the latter is in a peculiar manner adapted to ſatisfy a fair mind; and is more eaſily applicable to the ſeveral particular relations and circumſtances in life.

THE following diſcourſes proceed chiefly in this latter method. The three firſt wholly. They were intended to explain what is meant by the nature of man, when it is ſaid that virtue conſiſts in following, and vice in deviating from it; and by explaining to ſhew that the aſſertion is true. That the antient moraliſts had ſome inward feeling or other, which they choſe to expreſs in this manner, that man is born to virtue, that it conſiſts in following nature, and that vice is more contrary to this nature than tortures or death, their works in our hands are inſtances. Now a perſon who found no myſtery in this way of ſpeaking of the ancients; who, without being very explicit with himſelf, kept to his natural feeling, went along with them, and found within him-

ſelf a full conviction that what they laid down was juſt and true; ſuch an one would probably wonder to ſee a point, in which he never perceived any difficulty, ſo laboured as this is, in the ſecond and third ſermons; inſomuch perhaps as to be at a loſs for the occaſion, ſcope and drift of them. But it need not be thought ſtrange that this manner of expreſſion, though familiar with them, and, if not uſually carried ſo far, yet not uncommon amongſt ourſelves, ſhould want explaining; ſince there are ſeveral perceptions daily felt and ſpoken of, which yet it may not be very eaſy at firſt view to explicate, to diſtinguiſh from all others, and aſcertain exactly what the idea or perception is. The many treatiſes upon the paſſions are a proof of this; ſince ſo many would never have undertaken to unfold their ſeveral complications, and trace and reſolve them into their principles, if they had thought, what they were endeavouring to ſhew, was obvious to every one, who felt and talked of

thoſe paſſions. Thus, though there ſeems no ground to doubt, but that the generality of mankind have the inward perception expreſſed ſo commonly in that manner by the ancient moraliſts, more than to doubt whether they have thoſe paſſions; yet it appeared of uſe to unfold that inward conviction, and lay it open in a more explicit manner, than I had ſeen done; eſpecially when there were not wanting perſons, who manifeſtly miſtook the whole thing, and ſo had great reaſon to expreſs themſelves diſſatisfied with it. A late author of great and deſerved reputation ſays, that to place virtue in following nature, is at beſt a looſe way of talk. And he has reaſon to ſay this, if what I think he intends to expreſs, though with great decency, be true, that ſcarce any other ſenſe can be put upon thoſe words, but acting as any of the ſeveral parts, without diſtinction, of a man's nature happened moſt to incline him*.

* Rel. of Nature delin. Ed. 1724. p. 22, 23

WHOEVER thinks it worth while to conſider this matter thoroughly, ſhould begin with ſtating to himſelf exactly the idea of a ſyſtem, oeconomy or conſtitution of any particular nature, or particular any thing: and he will, I ſuppoſe, find, that it is an one or a whole made up of ſeveral parts; but yet, that the ſeveral parts, even conſidered as a whole, do not complete the idea, unleſs in the notion of a whole, you include the relations and reſpects, which thoſe parts have to each other. Every work both of nature and of art is a ſyſtem: and as every particular thing both natural and artificial is for ſome uſe or purpoſe out of and beyond itſelf, one may add, to what has been already brought into the idea of a ſyſtem, its conduciveneſs to this one or more ends. Let us inſtance in a watch—Suppoſe the ſeveral parts taken to pieces, and placed apart from each other: let a man have ever ſo exact a notion of theſe ſeveral parts, unleſs he conſiders the reſpects and rela-

tions which they have to each other, he will not have any thing like the idea of a watch. Suppoſe theſe ſeveral parts brought together and any how united: neither will he yet, be the union ever ſo cloſe, have an idea which will bear any reſemblance to that of a watch. But let him view thoſe ſeveral parts put together in the manner of a watch; let him form a notion of the relations which thoſe ſeveral parts have to each other—all conducive in their reſpective ways, to this purpoſe, ſhewing the hour of the day; and then he has the idea of a watch. Thus it is with regard to the inward frame of man. Appetites, paſſions, affections, and the principle of reflection, conſidered merely as the ſeveral parts of our inward nature, do not at all give us an idea of the ſyſtem or conſtitution of this nature: becauſe the conſtitution is formed by ſomewhat not yet taken into conſideration, namely by the relations, which theſe ſeveral parts have to each other; the chief of which is the

authority of reflection or conſcience. It is from conſidering the relations which the ſeveral appetites and paſſions in the inward frame have to each other, and above all the ſupremacy of reflection or conſcience, that we get the idea of the ſyſtem or conſtitution of human nature. And from the idea itſelf it will as fully appear, that this our nature, that is, conſtitution, is adapted to virtue, as from the idea of a watch it appears, that its nature, that is, conſtitution or ſyſtem is adapted to meaſure time. What in fact or event commonly happens, is nothing to this queſtion. Every work of art is apt to be out of order: but this is ſo far from being according to its ſyſtem, that let the diſorder increaſe, and it will totally deſtroy it. This is merely by way of explanation, what an oeconomy, ſyſtem or conſtitution is. And thus far the caſes are perfectly parallel. If we go further, there is indeed a difference, nothing to the preſent purpoſe, but too important an one ever to be omit-

ted. A machine is inanimate and paſſive: but we are agents. Our conſtitution is put in our own power. We are charged with it: and therefor are accountable for any diſorder or violation of it.

Thus nothing can poſſibly be more contrary to nature than vice; meaning by nature, not only the *ſeveral parts* of our internal frame, but alſo the *conſtitution* of it. Poverty and diſgrace, tortures and death are not ſo contrary to it. Miſery and injuſtice are equally contrary to ſome different parts of our nature taken ſingly: but injuſtice is moreover contrary to the whole conſtitution of the nature.

If it be aſked, whether this conſtitution be really what thoſe philoſophers meant, and whether they would have explained themſelves in this manner? the anſwer is the ſame, as if it ſhould be aſked, whether a perſon, who had often uſed the word reſentment and felt the thing, would have explained this paſſion ex-

actly in the ſame manner, in which it is done in one of theſe diſcourſes? As I have no doubt, but that this is a true account of that paſſion, which he referred to and intended to expreſs by the word, reſentment; ſo I have no doubt, but that this is the true account of the ground of that conviction, which they referred to, when they ſaid, vice was contrary to nature. And though it ſhould be thought that they meant no more than, that vice was contrary to the higher and better part of our nature; even this implies ſuch a conſtitution as I have endeavoured to explain. For the very terms, higher and better, imply a relation or reſpect of parts to each other; and theſe relative parts, being in one and the ſame nature, form a conſtitution and are the very idea of it. They had a perception that injuſtice was contrary to their nature, and that pain was ſo alſo. They obſerved theſe two perceptions totally different, not in degree, but in kind: and the reflecting upon each of them as they thus ſtood

in their nature, wrought a full intuitive conviction, that more was due and of right belonged to one of theſe inward perceptions, than to the other; that it demanded in all caſes to govern ſuch a creature as man. So that upon the whole, this is a fair and true account of what was the ground of their conviction; of what they intended to refer to when they ſaid, virtue conſiſted in following nature: a manner of ſpeaking not looſe and undeterminate, but clear and diſtinct, ſtrictly juſt and true.

THOUGH I am perſuaded the force of this conviction is felt by almoſt every one; yet ſince, conſidered as an argument and put in words, it appears ſomewhat abſtruſe, and ſince the connection of it is broken in the three firſt ſermons, it may not be amiſs to give the reader the whole argument here in one view.

MANKIND has various inſtincts and principles of action, as brute creatures have; ſome

leading moſt directly and immediately to the good of the community, and ſome moſt directly to private good.

MAN has ſeveral which brutes have not; particularly reflection or conſcience, an approbation of ſome principles or actions, and diſapprobation of others.

BRUTES obey their inſtincts or principles of action, according to certain rules; ſuppoſe the conſtitution of their body, and the objects around them.

THE generality of mankind alſo obey their inſtincts and principles, all of them; thoſe propenſions we call good, as well as the bad, according to the ſame rules; namely, the conſtitution of their body, and the external circumſtances which they are in. [Therefor it is not a true repreſentation of mankind, to affirm that they are wholly governed by ſelf-love, the love of power and ſenſual appetites: ſince, as on the one hand, they are often actuated by theſe, without any regard to right or

wrong; ſo on the other, it is manifeſt fact, that the ſame perſons, the generality, are frequently influenced by friendſhip, compaſſion, gratitude; and even a general abhorrence of what is baſe, and liking of what is fair and juſt, takes its turn amongſt the other motives of action. This is the partial inadequate notion of human nature treated of in the firſt diſcourſe: and it is by this nature, if one may ſpeak ſo, that the world is in fact influenced, and kept in that tolerable order, in which it is.]

Brutes in acting according to the rules before-mentioned, their bodily conſtitution and circumſtances, act ſuitably to their whole nature. [It is however to be diſtinctly noted, that the reaſon why we affirm this, is not merely that brutes in fact act ſo; for this alone, however univerſal, does not at all determine, whether ſuch courſe of action be correſpondent to their whole nature: but the reaſon of the aſſertion is, that as in acting

thus, they plainly act conformably to ſomewhat in their nature, ſo from all obſervations we are able to make upon them, there does not appear the leaſt ground to imagine them to have any thing elſe in their nature, which requires a different rule or courſe of action.]

MANKIND alſo in acting thus would act ſuitably to their whole nature, if no more were to be ſaid of man's nature, than what has been now ſaid; if that, as it is a true, were alſo a complete, adequate account of our nature.

BUT that is not a complete account of man's nature. Somewhat further muſt be brought in to give us an adequate notion of it; namely, that one of thoſe principles of action, conſcience or reflection, compared with the reſt as they all ſtand together in the nature of man, plainly bears upon it marks of authority over all the reſt, and claims the abſolute direction of them all, to allow or forbid their gratification: a diſapprobation of reflec-

tion being in itſelf a principle manifeſtly ſuperior to a mere propenſion. And the concluſion is, that to allow no more to this ſuperior principle or part of our nature, than to other parts; to let it govern and guide only occaſionally in common with the reſt, as its turn happens to come, from the temper and circumſtances one happens to be in; this is not to act conformably to the conſtitution of man: neither can any human creature be ſaid to act conformably to his conſtitution of nature, unleſs he allows to that ſuperior principle the abſolute authority which is due to it. And this concluſion is abundantly confirmed from hence, that one may determine what courſe of action the oeconomy of man's nature requires, without ſo much as knowing in what degree of *ſtrength* the ſeveral principles prevail, or which of them have actually the greateſt influence.

THE practical reaſon of inſiſting ſo much upon this natural authority of the principle of

reflection or conſcience is, that it ſeems in great meaſure overlooked by many, who are by no means the worſt ſort of men. It is thought ſufficient to abſtain from groſs wickedneſs, and to be humane and kind to ſuch as happen to come in their way. Whereas in reality the very conſtitution of our nature requires, that we bring our whole conduct before this ſuperior faculty; wait its determination; enforce upon ourſelves its authority, and make it the buſineſs of our lives, as it is abſolutely the whole buſineſs of a moral agent, to conform ourſelves to it. This is the true meaning of that ancient precept, *Reverence thy ſelf.*

THE not taking into conſideration this authority, which is implied in the idea of reflex approbation or diſapprobation, ſeems a material deficiency or omiſſion in *Lord Shaftſbury's inquiry concerning virtue.* He has ſhewn beyond all contradiction, that virtue is naturally the intereſt or happineſs, and vice the miſery

of ſuch a creature as man, placed in the circumſtances which we are in this world. But ſuppoſe there are particular exceptions; a caſe which this author was unwilling to put, and yet ſurely it is to be put: or ſuppoſe a caſe which he has put and determined, that of a ſceptic not convinced of this happy tendency of virtue, or being of a contrary opinion. His determination is, that it would be *without remedy* *. One may ſay more explicitly, that leaving out the authority of reflex approbation, or diſapprobation, ſuch an one would be under an obligation to act viciouſly; ſince intereſt, one's own happineſs, is a manifeſt obligation, and there is not ſuppoſed to be any other obligation in the caſe. "But does it much "mend the matter, to take in that natural au- "thority of reflection? There indeed would "be an obligation to virtue; but would not "the obligation from ſuppoſed intereſt on the "ſide of vice remain?" If it ſhould, yet to be

* Characteriſtics. V. II. p 69.

under two contrary obligations, that is, under none at all, would not be exactly the ſame, as to be under a formal obligation to be vicious, or to be in circumſtances in which the conſtitution of man's nature plainly required, that vice ſhould be preferred. But the obligation on the ſide of intereſt really does not remain. For the natural authority of the principle of reflection is an obligation the moſt near and intimate, the moſt certain and known: whereas the contrary obligation can at the utmoſt appear no more than probable; ſince no man can be *certain* in any circumſtances, that vice is his intereſt in the preſent world, much leſs can he be certain againſt another: and thus the certain obligation would entirely ſuperſede and deſtroy the uncertain one; which yet would have been of real force without the former.

In truth, the taking in this conſideration, totally changes the whole ſtate of the caſe; and ſhews, what this author does not ſeem to

have been aware of, that the greateſt degree of ſcepticiſm which he thought poſſible, will ſtill leave men under the ſtricteſt moral obligations, whatever their opinion be concerning the happineſs of virtue. For that mankind upon reflection felt an approbation of what was good, and diſapprobation of the contrary, he thought a plain matter of fact, as it undoubtedly is, which none could deny, but from mere affectation. Take in then that authority and obligation, which is a conſtituent part of this reflex approbation, and it will undeniably follow, though a man ſhould doubt of every thing elſe, yet, that he would ſtill remain under the neareſt and moſt certain obligation to the practice of virtue; an obligation implied in the very idea of virtue, in the very idea of reflex approbation.

And how little influence ſoever this obligation alone can be expected to have in fact upon mankind, yet one may appeal even to intereſt

and ſelf-love, and aſk, ſince from man's nature, condition, and the ſhortneſs of life, ſo little, ſo very little indeed, can poſſibly in any caſe be gained by vice; whether it be ſo prodigious a thing to ſacrifice that little to the moſt intimate of all obligations; and which a man cannot tranſgreſs without being ſelf-condemned, and unleſs he has corrupted his nature, without real ſelf-diſlike? this queſtion I ſay may be aſked, even upon ſuppoſition that the proſpect of a future life were ever ſo uncertain.

THE obſervation that man is thus by his very nature a law to himſelf, purſued to its juſt conſequences, is of the utmoſt importance; becauſe, from it, it will follow, that though men ſhould, through ſtupidity or ſpeculative ſcepticiſm, be ignorant of or diſbelieve any authority in the univerſe to puniſh the violation of this law; yet, if there ſhould be ſuch authority, they would be as really liable to puniſhment, as though they had been before-

hand convinced, that ſuch puniſhment would follow. For in whatever ſenſe we underſtand juſtice, even ſuppoſing what I think would be very preſumptuous to aſſert, that the end of divine puniſhment is no other than that of civil puniſhment, namely, to prevent future miſchief; upon this bold ſuppoſition, ignorance or diſbelief of the ſanction would by no means exempt even from this juſtice: becauſe it is not foreknowlege of the puniſhment, which renders obnoxious to it; but merely violating a known obligation.

And here it comes in one's way to take notice of a manifeſt error or miſtake, in the author now cited, unleſs perhaps he has incautiouſly expreſſed himſelf ſo as to be miſunderſtood; namely, that *it is malice only, and not goodneſs, which can make us afraid* *. Whereas in reality, goodneſs is the natural and juſt object of the greateſt fear to an ill man. Malice may be appeaſed or ſatiated; humour

* Charact. V. I. p. 39.

may change: but goodneſs is a fixt, ſteady, immoveable principle of action. If either of the former holds the ſword of juſtice, there is plainly ground for the greateſt of crimes to hope for impunity: but if it be goodneſs, there can be no poſſible hope, whilſt the reaſons of things, or the ends of government, call for puniſhment. Thus every one ſees how much greater chance of impunity, an ill man has in a partial adminiſtration, than in a juſt and upright one. It is ſaid, that *the intereſt or good of the whole, muſt be the intereſt of the univerſal Being, and that He can have no other.* Be it ſo. This author has proved, that vice is naturally the miſery of mankind in this world. Conſequently it was for the good of the whole, that it ſhould be ſo. What ſhadow of reaſon then is there to aſſert, that this may not be the caſe hereafter? Danger of future puniſhment (and if there be danger, there is ground of fear) no more ſuppoſes malice, than the preſent feeling of puniſhment does.

THE ſermon *upon the Character of Balaam*, and that *upon Self-Deceit*, both relate to one ſubject. I am perſuaded, that a very great part of the wickedneſs of the world, is, one way or other, owing to the ſelf-partiality, ſelf-flattery and ſelf-deceit endeavoured there to be laid open and explained. It is to be obſerved amongſt perſons of the loweſt rank, in proportion to their compaſs of thought, as much as amongſt men of education and improvement. It ſeems, that people are capable of being thus artful with themſelves, in proportion as they are capable of being ſo with others. Thoſe who have taken notice that there is really ſuch a thing, namely, plain falſeneſs and inſincerity in men with regard to themſelves, will readily ſee the drift and deſign of theſe diſcourſes: and nothing, that I can add, will explain the deſign of them to him, who has not before-hand remarked, at leaſt, ſomewhat of the character. And yet, the admonitions they contain, may be as much

wanted by ſuch a perſon, as by others; for it is to be noted, that a man may be entirely poſſeſſed by this unfairneſs of mind, without having the leaſt ſpeculative notion what the thing is.

The account given of *Reſentment* in the eighth ſermon, is introductory to the following one *upon Forgiveneſs of Injuries*. It may poſſibly have appeared to ſome, at firſt ſight, a ſtrange aſſertion, that injury is the only natural object of ſettled reſentment, or that men do not in fact reſent deliberately any thing but under this appearance of injury. But I muſt deſire the reader not to take any aſſertion alone by itſelf, but to conſider the whole of what is ſaid upon it: becauſe this is neceſſary, not only in order to judge of the truth of it, but often, ſuch is the nature of language, to ſee the very meaning of the aſſertion. Particularly as to this, injury and injuſtice is, in the ſermon itſelf, explained to mean, not only the more groſs and ſhocking inſtances of wicked-

neſs, but alſo contempt, ſcorn, neglect, any ſort of diſagreeable behaviour towards a perſon, which he thinks other than what is due to him. And the general notion of injury or wrong, plainly comprehends this, though the words are moſtly confined to the higher degrees of it.

FORGIVENESS of injuries is one of the very few moral obligations which has been diſputed. But the proof that it is really an obligation, what our nature and condition require, ſeems very obvious, were it only from the conſideration that revenge is doing harm merely for harm's ſake. And as to the love of our enemies: reſentment cannot ſuperſede the obligation to univerſal benevolence, unleſs they are in the nature of the thing inconſiſtent, which they plainly are not *.

THIS divine precept, to forgive injuries and love our enemies, though to be met with in gentile moraliſts, yet is in a peculiar ſenſe a

* Serm. IX.

precept of chriſtianity; as our Saviour has inſiſted more upon it, than upon any other ſingle virtue. One reaſon of this doubtleſs is, that it ſo peculiarly becomes an imperfect, faulty creature. But it may be obſerved alſo, that a virtuous temper of mind, conſciouſneſs of innocence and good meaning towards every body, and a ſtrong feeling of injuſtice and injury, may itſelf, ſuch is the imperfection of our virtue, lead a perſon to violate this obligation, if he be not upon his guard And it may well be ſuppoſed, that this is another reaſon why it is ſo much inſiſted upon by Him, who *knew what was in man*.

The chief deſign of the eleventh diſcourſe is to ſtate the notion of ſelf-love and diſintereſtedneſs, in order to ſhew that benevolence is not more unfriendly to ſelf-love, than any other particular affection whatever. There is a ſtrange affectation in many people of explaining away all particular affections, and repreſenting the whole of life as nothing but

one continued exerciſe of ſelf-love. Hence ariſes that ſurpriſing confuſion and perplexity in the Epicureans * of old, Hobbs, the author of *Reflexions Sentences et Maxims Morales*, and this whole ſett of writers; the confuſion of calling actions intereſted which are done in contradiction to the moſt manifeſt known intereſt, merely for the gratification of a preſent paſſion. Now all this confuſion might eaſily be avoided, by ſtating to ourſelves wherein the idea of ſelf-love in general conſiſts, as diſtinguiſhed from all particular movements towards

* One need only look into Torquatus's account of the Epicurean ſyſtem, in Cicero's firſt book *De Finibus*, to ſee in what a ſurprizing manner this was done by them. Thus the deſire of praiſe, and of being beloved, he explains to be no other than deſire of ſafety: regard to our country, even in the moſt virtuous character, to be nothing but regard to ourſelves. The author of *Reflexions* etc. *Morales*, ſays, Curioſity proceeds from intereſt or pride; which pride alſo would doubtleſs have been explained to be ſelf-love. page 85. Ed. 1725. As if there were no ſuch paſſions in mankind, as deſire of eſteem, or of being beloved, or of knowlege. Hobb's accouut of the affections of goodwill and pity are inſtances of the ſame kind.

particular external objects; the appetites of ſenſe, reſentment, compaſſion, curioſity, ambition, and the reſt*. When this is done, if words *ſelfiſh* and *intereſted* cannot be parted with, but muſt be applied to every thing; yet, to avoid ſuch total confuſion of all language, let the diſtinction be made by epithets: and the firſt may be called cool or ſettled ſelfiſhneſs, and the other paſſionate or ſenſual ſelfiſhneſs. But the moſt natural way of ſpeaking plainly is, to call the firſt only, ſelf-love, and the actions proceeding from it, intereſted: and to ſay of the latter, that they are not love to ourſelves, but movements towards ſomewhat external: honour, power, the harm or good of another: and that the purſuit of theſe external objects, ſo far as it proceeds from theſe movements (for it may proceed from ſelf-love†) is no otherwiſe intereſted, than as every action of every creature muſt, from the nature of the

* Serm. XI. † See the note, p. xi.

thing, be; for no one can act but from a deſire, or choice, or preference of his own.

Self-love and any particular paſſion may be joined together; and from this complication, it becomes impoſſible in numberleſs inſtances to determine preciſely, how far an action, perhaps even of one's own, has for its principle general ſelf-love, or ſome particular paſſion. But this need create no confuſion in the ideas themſelves of ſelf-love and particular paſſions. We diſtinctly diſcern what one is, and what the other are: though we may be uncertain how far one or the other influences us. And though from this uncertainty, it cannot but be, that there will be different opinions concerning mankind, as more or leſs governed by intereſt; and ſome will aſcribe actions to ſelf-love, which others will aſcribe to particular paſſions: yet it is abſurd to ſay that mankind are wholly actuated by either; ſince it is manifeſt that both have their influence. For as, on the one hand, men form a

general notion of inteteſt, ſome placing it in one thing, and ſome in another, and have a conſiderable regard to it throughout the courſe of their life, which is owing to ſelf-love; ſo, on the other hand, they are often ſet on work by the particular paſſions themſelves, and a conſiderable part of life is ſpent in the actual gratification of them, that is, is employed, not by ſelf-love, but by the paſſions.

Besides, the very idea of an intereſted purſuit neceſſarily pre-ſuppoſes particular paſſions or appetites; ſince the very idea of intereſt or happineſs conſiſts in this, that an appetite or affection enjoys its object. It is not becauſe we love ourſelves that we find delight in ſuch and ſuch objects, but becauſe we have particular affections towards them. Take away theſe affections, and you leave ſelf-love abſolutely nothing at all to employ itſelf about*; no end or object for it to purſue, excepting only that of avoiding pain. Indeed

* Serm. XI.

the *Epicureans*, who maintained that abſence of pain was the higheſt happineſs, might, conſiſtently with themſelves, deny all affection, and, if they had ſo pleaſed, every ſenſual appetite too: but the very idea of intereſt or happineſs other than abſence of pain, implies particular appetites or paſſions; theſe being neceſſary to conſtitute that intereſt or happineſs.

THE obſervation that benevolence is no more diſintereſted than any of the common particular paſſions *, ſeems in itſelf worth being taken notice of; but is inſiſted upon to obviate that ſcorn which one ſees riſing upon the faces of people who are ſaid to know the world, when mentien is made of a diſintereſted, generous or public-ſpirited action. The truth of that obſervation might be made appear, in a more formal manner of proof: for whoever will conſider all the poſſible reſpects and relations which any particular affection

* Serm. XI.

can have to ſelf-love and private intereſt, will, I think, ſee demonſtrably, that benevolence is not in any reſpect more at variance with ſelf-love, than any other particular affection whatever, but that it is in every reſpect, at leaſt, as friendly to it.

If the obſervation be true, it follows, that ſelf-love and benevolence, virtue and intereſt, are not to be oppoſed, but only to be diſtinguiſhed from each other; in the ſame way as virtue and any other particular affection, love of arts, ſuppoſe, are to be diſtinguiſhed. Every thing is what it is, and not another thing. The goodneſs or badneſs of actions does not ariſe from hence, that the epithet, intereſted or diſintereſted, may be applied to them, any more than that any other indifferent epithet, ſuppoſe inquiſitive or jealous, may or may not be applied to them; not from their being attended with preſent or future pleaſure or pain; but from their being what they are: namely, what becomes ſuch creatures as we are, what

the ſtate of the caſe requires, or the contrary. Or, in other words, we may judge and determine, that an action is morally good or evil, before we ſo much as conſider, whether it be intereſted or diſintereſted. This conſideration no more comes in to determine, whether an action be virtuous, than to determine whether it be reſentful. Self-love in its due degree is as juſt and morally good, as any affection whatever. Benevolence towards particular perſons may be to a degree of weakneſs, and ſo be blameable: and diſintereſtedneſs is ſo far from being in itſelf commendable, that the utmoſt poſſible depravity, which we can in imagination conceive, is that of diſintereſted cruelty.

NEITHER does there appear any reaſon to wiſh ſelf-love were weaker in the generality of the world, than it is. The influence which it has, ſeems plainly owing to its being conſtant and habitual, which it cannot but be, and not to the degree or ſtrength of it. Every caprice of the imagination, every curioſity of

the underſtanding, every affection of the heart, is perpetually ſhewing its weakneſs, by prevailing over it. Men daily, hourly ſacrifice the greateſt known intereſt, to fancy, inquiſitiveneſs, love or hatred, any vagrant inclination. The thing to be lamented is, not that men have ſo great regard to their own good or intereſt in the preſent world, for they have not enough*; but that they have ſo little to the good of others. And this ſeems plainly owing to their being ſo much engaged in the gratification of particular paſſions unfriendly to benevolence, and which happen to be moſt prevalent in them, much more than to ſelf-love. As a proof of this may be obſerved, that there is no character more void of friendſhip, gratitude, natural affection, love to their country, common juſtice, or more equally and uniformly hard-hearted, than the *abandoned*, in, what is called, the way of pleaſure—hard-hearted and totally without feeling in

* Serm. I.

behalf of others; except when they cannot eſcape the ſight of diſtreſs, and ſo are interrupted by it in their pleaſures. And yet it is ridiculous to call ſuch an abandoned courſe of pleaſure intereſted, when the perſon engaged in it knows before-hand, and goes on under the feeling and apprehenſion, that it will be as ruinous to himſelf, as to thoſe who depend upon him,

Upon the whole, if the generality of mankind were to cultivate within themſelves the principle of ſelf-love; if they were to accuſtom themſelves often to ſet down and conſider, what was the greateſt happineſs they were capable of attaining for themſelves in this life, and if ſelf-love were ſo ſtrong and prevalent, as that they would uniformly purſue this their ſuppoſed chief temporal good, without being diverted from it by any particular paſſion; it would manifeſtly prevent numberleſs follies and vices. This was in a great meaſure the Epicurean ſyſtem of philoſophy. It is indeed by no means

the religious, or even moral inſtitution of life. Yet, with all the miſtakes men would fall into about intereſt, it would be leſs miſchievous, than the extravagancies of mere appetite, will, and pleaſure: for certainly ſelf-love, though confined to the intereſt of this life, is, of the two, a much better guide than paſſion *, which has abſolutely no bound nor meaſure, but what is ſet to it by this ſelf-love, or moral conſiderations.

From the diſtinction above made between ſelf-love, and the ſeveral particular principles or affections in our nature, we may ſee how good ground there was for that aſſertion, maintained by the ſeveral ancient *ſchools* of philoſophy againſt the Epicureans, namely, that virtue is to be purſued as an end, eligible in and for itſelf. For, if there be any principles or affections in the mind of man diſtinct from ſelf-love, that the things thoſe principles tend towards or that the objects of thoſe affections are, each

of them, in themſelves eligible, to be purſued upon its own account, and to be reſted in as an end, is implied in the very idea of ſuch principles or affection *. They indeed aſſerted much higher things of virtue, and with very good reaſon; but to ſay thus much of it, that it is to be purſued for itſelf, is to ſay no more of it, than may truly be ſaid of the object of every natural affection whatever.

THE queſtion, which was a few years ago diſputed in France, concerning *the Love of God*, which was there called enthuſiaſm, as it will every where by the generality of the world; this queſtion, I ſay, anſwers in *religion*, to that old one In *morals* now mentioned. And both of them, I think, are fully determined by the ſame obſervation, namely, that the very nature of affection, the idea itſelf, neceſſarily implies reſting in its object as an end.

I SHALL not here add any thing further, to what I have ſaid in the two diſcourſes upon

* Serm. XIII.

that moſt important ſubject, but only this: that if we are conſtituted ſuch ſort of creatures, as from our very nature, to feel certain affections or movements of mind, upon the ſight or contemplation of the meaneſt inanimate part of the creation, for the flowers of the field have their beauty; certainly there muſt be ſomewhat due to him himſelf, who is the author and cauſe of all things; who is more intimately preſent to us, than any thing elſe can be, and with whom we have a nearer and more conſtant intercourſe, than we can have with any creature: there muſt be ſome movements of mind and heart which correſpond to his perfections, or of which thoſe perfections are the natural object. And that when we are commanded to *love the Lord our God, with all our heart, with all our mind, and with all our ſoul;* ſomewhat more muſt be meant than merely, that we live in hope of rewards, or fear of puniſhments from Him; ſomewhat more than this muſt be intended: though theſe re-

gards themſelves are moſt juſt and reaſonable, and abſolutely neceſſary to be often recollected, in ſuch a world as this.

It may be proper juſt to advertiſe the reader, that he is not to look for any particular reaſon for the choice of the greateſt part of theſe diſcourſes; their being taken from amongſt many others, preached in the ſame place, through a courſe of eight years, being in great meaſure accidental. Neither is he to expect to find any other connection between them, than that uniformity of thought and deſign, which will always be found in the writings of the ſame perſon, when he writes with ſimplicity and in earneſt.

STANHOPE,
Sept. the 16th, 1729,

SERMONS

Preached at the

ROLLS CHAPEL.

SERMON I.

Upon HUMAN NATURE.

ROM. xii. 4, 5.

For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the ſame office: ſo we being many are one body in Chriſt, and every one members of one another.

THE epiſtles in the New Teſtament have all of them a particular reference to the condition and uſages of the chriſtian world at the time they were written. Therefor, as they cannot be thoroughly underſtood, unleſs that condition and thoſe uſages are known and attended to: ſo further, though they be known, yet if they be diſcontinued or

changed; exhortations, precepts, and illuſtrations of things, which refer to ſuch circumſtances now ceaſed or altered, cannot at this time be urged in that manner, and with that force which they were to the primitive chriſtians. Thus the text now before us, in its firſt intent and deſign, relates to the decent management of thoſe extraordinary gifts which were then in the church*, but which are now totally ceaſed. And even as to the alluſion, that *we are one body in Chriſt;* though what the apoſtle here intends is equally true of chriſtians in all circumſtances; and the conſideration of it is plainly ſtill an additional motive, over and above moral conſiderations, to the diſcharge of the ſeveral duties and offices of a chriſtian: yet it is manifeſt this alluſion muſt have appeared with much greater force to thoſe, who by the many difficulties they went through for the ſake of their religion, were led to keep always in view the relation they ſtood in to their Saviour, who had undergone the ſame; to thoſe, who from the idolatries of all around

* 1 Cor. xii.

them, and their ill treatment, were taught to consider themselves as not of the world in which they lived, but as a distinct society of themselves; with laws, and ends, and principles of life and action, quite contrary to those which the world professed themselves at that time influenced by. Hence the relation of a christian was by them considered as nearer than that of affinity and blood; and they almost literally esteemed themselves as members one of another.

It cannot indeed possibly be denied, that our being God's creatures, and virtue being the natural law we are born under, and the whole constitution of man being plainly adapted to it, are prior obligations to piety and virtue, than the consideration that God sent his Son into the world to save it, and the motives which arise from the peculiar relations of christians, as members one of another under Christ our head. However, though all this be allowed, as it expresly is by the inspired writers; yet it is manifest that christians at the time of the revelation, and immediately after, could

not but inſiſt moſtly upon conſiderations of this latter kind.

THESE obſervations ſhow the original particular reference of the text; and the peculiar force with which the thing intended by the alluſion in it muſt have been felt by the primitive chriſtian world. They likewiſe afford a reaſon for treating it at this time in a more general way.

THE relation, which the ſeveral parts or members of the natural body have to each other and to the whole body, is here compared to the relation which each particular perſon in ſociety has to other particular perſons and to the whole ſociety: and the latter is intended to be illuſtrated by the former. And if there be a likeneſs between theſe two relations, the conſequence is obvious: that the latter ſhows us we were intended to do good to others, as the former ſhows us that the ſeveral members of the natural body were intended to be inſtruments of good to each other and to the whole body. But as there is ſcarce any ground for a compariſon between ſociety and the mere material body, this without the mind

being a dead and unactive thing; much leſs can the compariſon be carried to any length. And ſince the apoſtle ſpeaks of the ſeveral members as having diſtinct offices, which implies the mind; it cannot be thought an unallowable liberty, inſtead of the *body* and *its members*, to ſubſtitute the *whole nature of man*, and *all the variety of internal principles which belong to it*. And then the compariſon will be between the nature of man as reſpecting ſelf, and tending to private good, his own preſervation and happineſs; and the nature of man as having reſpect to ſociety, and tending to promote public good, the happineſs of that ſociety. Theſe ends do indeed perfectly coincide; and to aim at public and private good are ſo far from being inconſiſtent, that they mutually promote each other: yet in the following diſcourſe they muſt be conſidered as entirely diſtinct; otherwiſe the nature of man as tending to one, or as tending to the other, cannot be compared. There can no compariſon be made, without conſidering the things compared as diſtinct and different.

From this review and compariſon of the

natnre of man as reſpecting ſelf, and as reſpecting ſociety, it will plainly appear, that *there are as real and the ſame kind of indications in human nature, that we were made for ſociety and to do good to our fellow-creatures; as that we were intended to take care of our own life and health and private good:* and *that the ſame objections lie againſt one of theſe aſſertions, as againſt the other.* For

Firſt, THERE is a natural principle of *benevolence* * in man; which is in ſome degree to

* Suppoſe a man of learning to be writing a grave book upon Human Nature, and to ſhew in ſeveral parts of it that he had an inſight into the ſubject he was conſidering: amongſt other things, the following one would require to be accounted for: the appearance of benevolence or good-will in men towards each other, in the inſtances of natural relation, and in others †. Cautious of being deceived by outward ſhow, he retires within himſelf to ſee exactly, what *that* is in the mind of man from whence this appearance proceeds; and upon deep reflection, aſſerts the principle in the mind to be only the love of power, and delight in the exerciſe of it. Would not every body think here was a miſtake of one word for another? That the philoſopher was contemplating and accounting for ſome other Human Actions, ſome other behaviour of

ociety, what *ſelf-love* is to the *individual*. And if there be in mankind any diſpoſition to

man to man? and could any one be thoroughly ſatisfied, that what is commonly called benevolence or good-will was really the affection meant, but only by being made to underſtand that this learned perſon had a general hypotheſis, to which the appearance of good-will could no otherwiſe be reconciled? that what has this appearance is often nothing but ambition; that delight in ſuperiority often (ſuppoſe always) mixes itſelf with benevolence, only makes it more ſpecious to call it ambition than hunger, of the two: but in reality that paſſion does no more account for the whole appearances of good-will, than this appetite does. Is there not often the appearance of one man's wiſhing that good to another, which he knows himſelf unable to procure him; and rejoicing in it, though beſtowed by a third perſon? and can love of power any way poſſibly come in to account for this deſire or delight? Is there not often the appearance of men's diſtinguiſhing between two or more perſons, preferring one before another to do good to, in caſes where love of power cannot in the leaſt account for the diſtinction and preference? For this principle can no otherwiſe diſtinguiſh between objects, than as it is a greater inſtance and exertion of power to do good to one rather than to another. Again, ſuppoſe good-will in the mind of man to be nothing but delight in the exerciſe

friendſhip; if there be any ſuch thing as compaſſion, for compaſſion is momentary love; if

of power; men might indeed be reſtrained by diſtant and accidental conſiderations; but theſe reſtraints being removed, they would have a diſpoſition to, and delight in charity. Thus cruelty, as diſtinct from envy and reſentment, would be exactly the ſame in the mind of man as good-will: that one tends to the happineſs, the other to the miſery of our fellow-creatures, is it ſeems merely an accidental circumſtance, which the mind has not the leaſt regard to. Theſe are the abſurdities which even men of capacity run into, when they have occaſion to belie their nature, and will perverſely diſclaim that image of God which was originally ſtamped upon it; the traces of which, however faint, are plainly diſcernible upon the mind of man. † Hobbs of human nature, c. 9. § 17.

If any perſon can in earneſt doubt, whether there be ſuch a thing as good-will in one man towards another; (for the queſtion is not concerning either the degree or extenſiveneſs of it, but concerning the affection itſelf;) let it be obſerved, that *Whether man be thus, or otherwiſe conſtituted, What is the inward frame in this particular*, is a mere queſtion of fact or natural hiſtory, not proveable immediately by reaſon. It is therefor to be judged of and determined in the ſame way other facts or matters of natural hiſtory are: by appealing to the external ſenſes, or inward perceptions, reſpec-

there be any ſuch thing as the paternal or filial affections; if there be any affection in human nature, the object and end of which is

tively, as the matter under conſideration is cognizable by one or the other: by arguing from acknowleged facts and actions; for a great number of actions of the ſame kind, in different circumſtances, and reſpecting different objects, will prove to a certainty, what principles they do not, and, to the greateſt probability, what principles they do proceed from: and laſtly, by the teſtimony of mankind. Now, that there is ſome degree of benevolence amongſt men, may be as ſtrongly and plainly proved in all theſe ways, as it could poſſibly be proved, ſuppoſing there was this affection in our nature. And ſhould any one think fit to aſſert, that reſentment in the mind of man was abſolutely nothing but reaſonable concern for our own ſafety; the falſity of this, and what is the real nature of that paſſion, could be ſhewn in no other ways than thoſe in which it may be ſhewn, that there is ſuch a thing in ſome degree as real good-will in man towards man. It is ſufficient that the ſeeds of it be implanted in our nature by God. There is, it is owned, much left for us to do upon our own heart and temper; to cultivate, to improve, to call it forth, to exerciſe it in a ſteady uniform manner. This is our work: this is virtue and religion.

the good of another; this is itſelf benevolence or the love of another. Be it ever ſo ſhort, be it in ever ſo ſlow a degree, or ever ſo unhappily confined; it proves the aſſertion, and points out what we were deſigned for, as really as though it were in a higher degree and more extenſive. I muſt however remind you, that though benevolence and ſelf-love are different; though the former tends moſt directly to public good, and the latter to private: yet they are ſo perfectly coincident, that the greateſt ſatisfaction to ourſelves depend upon our having benevolence in a due degree; and that ſelf-love is one chief ſecurity of our right behaviour towards ſociety. It may be added, that their mutual coinciding, ſo that we can ſcarce promote one without the other, is equally a proof that we were made for both.

Secondly, THIS will further appear from obſerving that the *ſeveral paſſions* and *affections*, which are diſtinct * both from benevo-

* Every body makes a diſtinction between ſelf-love, and the ſeveral particular paſſions, appetites, and affections; and yet they are often confounded again. That they are totally different will be ſeen by any one

lence and ſelf-love, do in general contribute and lead us to *public* good, as really as to *pri-*

who will diſtinguiſh between the paſſions and appetites themſelves, and endeavouring after the means of their gratification. Conſider the appetite of hunger, and the deſire of eſteem: theſe being the occaſion both of pleaſure and pain, the coolest ſelf-love, as well as the appetites and paſſions themſelves, may put us upon making uſe of the proper methods of obtaining that pleaſure, and avoiding that pain; but the feelings themſelves, the pain of hunger and ſhame, and the delight from eſteem, are no more ſelf-love than they are any thing in the world. Though a man hated himſelf, he would as much feel the pain of hunger as he would that of the gout: and it is plainly ſuppoſeable there may be creatures with ſelf-love in them to the higheſt degree, who may be quite inſenſible and indifferent (as men in ſome caſes are) to the contempt and eſteem of thoſe, upon whom their happineſs does not in ſome further reſpects depend. And as ſelf-love and the ſeveral particular paſſions and appetites are in themſelves totally different; ſo, that ſome actions proceed from one, and ſome from the other, will be manifeſt to any who will obſerve the two following very ſuppoſeable caſes. One man ruſhes upon certain ruin for the gratification of a preſent deſire: no body will call the principle of this action ſelf-love. Suppoſe another man to go through ſome laborious work upon promiſe

vate. It might be thought too minute and particular, and would carry us too great a length, to diſtinguiſh between and compare together the ſeveral paſſions or appetites diſtinct from benevolence, whoſe primary uſe and intention is the ſecurity and good of ſociety; and the paſſions diſtinct from ſelf-love, whoſe primary intention and deſign is the ſecurity and good of the individual*. It is e-

of a great reward, without any diſtinct knowlege what the reward will be: this courſe of action cannot be aſcribed to any particular paſſion. The former of theſe actions is plainly to be imputed to ſome particular paſſion or affection, the latter as plainly to the general affection or principle of ſelf-love. That there are ſome particular purſuits or actions concerning which we cannot determine how far they are owing to one, and how far to the other, proceeds from this, that the two principles are frequently mixt together, and run up into each other. This diſtinction is further explained in the eleventh ſermon.

* If any deſire to ſee this diſtinction and compariſon made in a particular inſtance, the appetite and paſſion now mentioned may ſerve for one. Hunger is to be conſidered as a private appetite; becauſe the end for which it was given us is the preſervation of the individual. Deſire of eſteem is a public paſſion; becauſe the end for which it was given us is to regulate

nough to the preſent argument, that deſire of eſteem from others, contempt and eſteem of them, love of ſociety as diſtinct from affection to the good of it, indignation againſt ſucceſsful vice, that theſe are public affections or paſſions; have an immediate reſpect to others, naturally lead us to regulate our behaviour in ſuch a manner as will be of ſervice to our fellow-creatures. If any or all of theſe may be conſidered likewiſe as private affections, as tending to private good; this does not hinder them from being public affections too, or deſtroy the good influence of them upon ſociety, and their tendency to public good. It may be added, that as perſons without any conviction from reaſon of the deſirableneſs of life, would yet of courſe preſerve it merely from the

our behaviour towards ſociety. The reſpect which this has to private good is as remote, as the reſpect that has to public good: and the appetite is no more ſelf-love, than the paſſion is benevolence. The object and end of the former is merely food; the object and end of the latter is merely eſteem: but the latter can no more be gratified, without contributing to the good of ſociety; than the former can be gratified, without contributing to the preſervation of the individual.

appetite of hunger; ſo by acting merely from regard, ſuppoſe, to reputation, without any conſideration of the good of others, men often contribute to public good. In both theſe inſtances they are plainly inſtruments in the hands of another, in the hands of providence, to carry on ends, the preſervation of the individual and good of ſociety, which they themſelves have not in their view or intention. The ſum is, men have various appetites, paſſions, and particular affections, quite diſtinct both from ſelf-love, and from benevolence: all of theſe have a tendency to promote both public and private good, and may be conſidered as reſpecting others and ourſelves equally and in common: but ſome of them ſeem moſt immediately to reſpect ſelf, or tend to private good: as the former are not benevolence, ſo the latter are not ſelf-love: neither ſort are inſtances of our love either to ourſelves or others; but only inſtances of our Maker's care and love both of the individual and the ſpecies, and proofs that he intended we ſhould be inſtruments of good to each other, as well as that we ſhould be ſo to our ſelves.

Thirdly, THERE is a principle of reflection in men, by which they diſtinguiſh between, approve and diſapprove their own actions. We are plainly conſtituted ſuch ſort of creatures as to reflect upon our own nature. The mind can take a view of what paſſes within itſelf, its propenſions, averſions, paſſions, affections, as reſpecting ſuch objects, and in ſuch degrees; and of the ſeveral actions conſequent thereupon. In this ſurvey it approves of one, and diſapproves of another, and towards a third is affected in neither of theſe ways, but is quite indifferent. This principle in man, by which he approves or diſapproves his heart, temper and actions, is conſcience; for this is the ſtrict ſenſe of the word, though ſometimes it is uſed ſo as to take in more. And that this faculty tends to reſtrain men from doing miſchief to each other, and leads them to do good, is too manifeſt to need being inſiſted upon. Thus a parent has the affection of love to his children: this leads him to take care of, to educate, to make due proviſion for them; the natural affection leads to this: but the reflection that it is his proper

buſineſs, what belongs to him, that it is right and commendable ſo to do; this added to the affection, becomes a much more ſettled principle, and carries him on through more labour and difficulties for the ſake of his children, than he would undergo from that affection, alone; if he thought it, and the courſe of action is led to, either indifferent or criminal. This indeed is impoſſible, to do that which is good and not to approve of it; for which reaſon they are frequently not conſidered as diſtinct, though they really are: for men often approve of the actions of others, which they will not imitate, and likewiſe do that which they approve not. It cannot poſſibly be denied that there is this principle of reflection or conſcience in human nature. Suppoſe a man to relieve an innocent perſon in great diſtreſs; ſuppoſe the ſame man afterwards, in the fury of anger, to do the greateſt miſchief to a perſon who had given no juſt cauſe of offence; to aggravate the injury, add the circumſtances of former friendſhip, and obligation from the injured perſon; let the man, who is ſuppoſed to have done theſe two different actions, coolly

reflect upon them afterwards, without regard to their conſequences to himſelf: to aſſert that any common man would be affected in the ſame way towards theſe different actions, that he would make no diſtinction between them, but approve or diſapprove them equally, is too glaring a falſity to need being confuted. There is therefor this principle of reflection or conſcience in mankind. It is needleſs to compare the reſpect it has to private good, with the reſpect it has to public; ſince it plainly tends as much to the latter as to the former, and is commonly thought to tend chiefly to the latter. This faculty is now mentioned merely as another part of the inward frame of man, pointing out to us in ſome degree what we are intended for, and as what will naturally and of courſe have ſome influence. The particular place aſſigned to it by nature, what authority it has, and how great influence it ought to have, ſhall be hereafter conſidered.

From this compariſon of benevolence and ſelf-love, of our public and private affections, of the courſes of life they lead to, and of the

principle of reflection or conſcience as reſpecting each of them, it is as manifeſt, that *we were made for ſociety, and to promote the happineſs of it; as that we were intended to take care of our own life, and health, and private good.*

And from this whole review muſt be given a different draught of human nature from what we are often preſented with. Mankind are by nature ſo cloſely united, there is ſuch a correſpondence between the inward ſenſations of one man and thoſe of another, that diſgrace is as much avoided as bodily pain, and to be the object of eſteem and love as much deſired as any external goods; and in many particular caſes, perſons are carried on to do good to others, as the end their affection tends to and reſts in; and manifeſt that they find real ſatisfaction and enjoyment in this courſe of behaviour. There is ſuch a natural principle of attraction in man towards man, that having trod the ſame tract of land, having breathed in the ſame climate, barely having been born in the ſame artificial diſtrict or diviſion, becomes the occaſion of contracting acquaintances and

familiarities many years after: for any thing may ſerve the purpoſe. Thus relations merely nominal are ſought and invented, not by governors, but by the loweſt of the people; which are found ſufficient to hold mankind together in little fraternities and copartnerſhips: weak ties indeed, and what may afford fund enough for ridicule, if they are abſurdly conſidered as the real principles of that union: but they are in truth merely the occaſions, as any thing may be of any thing, upon which our nature carries us on according to its own previous bent and bias; which occaſions therefore would be nothing at all, were there not this prior diſpoſition and bias of nature. Men are ſo much one body, that in a peculiar manner they feel for each other, ſhame, ſudden danger, reſentment, honour, proſperity, diſtreſs; one or another, or all of theſe, from the ſocial nature in general, from benevolence, upon the occaſion of natural relation, acquaintance, protection, dependance; each of theſe being diſtinct cements of ſociety. And therefore to have no reſtraint from, no regard to others in our behaviour, is the ſpeculative

abſurdity of conſidering ourſelves as ſingle and independent, as having nothing in our nature which has reſpect to our fellow-creatures, reduced to action and practice. And this is the ſame abſurdity, as to ſuppoſe a hand, or any part, to have no natural reſpect to any other, or to the whole body.

But allowing all this, it may be aſked, "Has not man diſpoſitions and principles "within, which lead him to do evil to others, "as well as to do good? Whence come the "many miſeries elſe, which men are the au-"thors and inſtruments of to each other?" Theſe queſtions, ſo far as they relate to the foregoing diſcourſe, may be anſwered, by aſking, Has not man alſo diſpoſitions and principles within, which lead him to do evil to himſelf, as well as good? Whence come the many miſeries elſe, ſickneſs, pain and death, which men are the inſtruments and authors of to themſelves?

It may be thought more eaſy to anſwer one of theſe queſtions than the other, but the anſwer to both is really the ſame; that mankind have ungoverned paſſions which they will

gratify at any rate, as well to the injury of others, as in contradiction to known private intereſt: but that as there is no ſuch thing as ſelf-hatred, ſo neither is there any ſuch thing as ill-will in one man towards another, emulation and reſentment being away; whereas there is plainly benevolence or good-will: there is no ſuch thing as love of injuſtice, oppreſſion, treachery, ingratitude; but only eager deſires after ſuch and ſuch external goods; which, according to a very ancient obſervation, the moſt abandoned would chooſe to obtain by innocent means, if they were as eaſy, and as effectual to their end: that even emulation and reſentment, by any one who will conſider what theſe paſſions really are in nature *, will be found nothing to the purpoſe of this objection: and that the princi-

* Emulation is merely the deſire and hope of equality with or ſuperiority over others, with whom we compare our ſelves. There does not appear to be any other grief in the natural paſſion, but only that want which is implied in deſire. However this may be ſo ſtrong as to be the occaſion of great grief. To deſire the attainment of this equality or ſuperiority by the

ples and paſſions in the mind of man, which are diſtinct both from ſelf-love and benevolence, primarily and moſt directly lead to right behaviour with regard to others as well as himſelf, and only ſecondarily and accidentally to what is evil. Thus, though men to avoid the ſhame of one villany are ſometimes guilty of a greater, yet it is eaſy to ſee, that the original tendency of ſhame is to prevent the doing of ſhameful actions; and its leading men to conceal ſuch actions when done, is only in conſequence of their being done; that is, of the paſſions not having anſwered its firſt end.

If it be ſaid, that there are perſons in the world, who are in great meaſure without the natural affections towards their fellow-creatures: there are likewiſe inſtances of perſons

particular means of others, being brought down to our own level, or below it, is, I think, the diſtinct notion of envy. From whence it is eaſy to ſee, that the real end, which the natural paſſion emulation, and which the unlawful one envy aims at, is exactly the ſame; namely, that equality or ſuperiority; and conſequently, that to do miſchief is not the end of envy, but merely the means it makes uſe of to attain its end. As to reſentment, ſee the eighth ſermon.

without the common natural affections to themſelves: but the nature of man is not to be judged of by either of theſe, but by what appears in the common world, in the bulk of mankind.

I AM afraid it would be thought very ſtrange, if to confirm the truth of this account of human nature, and make out the juſtneſs of the foregoing compariſon, it ſhould be added, that from what appears, men in fact as much and as often contradict that part of their nature which reſpects ſelf, and which leads them to their own private good and happineſs; as they contradict that part of it which reſpects ſociety, and tends to public good: that there are as few perſons who attain the greateſt ſatisfaction and enjoyment which they might attain in the preſent world; as who do the greateſt good to others which they might do: nay, that there are as few who can be ſaid really and in earneſt to aim at one, as at the other. Take a ſurvey of mankind: the world in general, the good and bad, almoſt without exception, equally are agreed, that were religion out of the caſe, the happineſs of the preſent

life would conſiſt in a manner wholly in riches, honours, ſenſual gratifications; inſomuch that one ſcarce hears a reflection made upon prudence, life, conduct, but upon this ſuppoſition. Yet, on the contrary, that perſons in the greateſt affluence of fortune are no happier than ſuch as have only a competency; that the cares and diſappointments of ambition for the moſt part far exceed the ſatisfactions of it; as alſo the miſerable intervals of intemperance and exceſs, and the many untimely deaths occaſioned by a diſſolute courſe of life: theſe things are all ſeen, acknowleged, by every one acknowleged; but are thought no objections againſt, though they expreſly contradict, this univerſal principle, that the happineſs of the preſent life conſiſts in one or other of them. Whence is all this abſurdity and contradiction? Is not the middle way obvious? Can any thing be more manifeſt, than that the happineſs of life conſiſts in theſe poſſeſſed and enjoyed only to a certain degree; that to purſue them beyond this degree, is always attended with more inconvenience than advantage to a man's ſelf, and often with extreme miſery and unhappineſs.

Whence then, I ſay, is all this abſurdity and contradiction? Is it really the reſult of conſideration in mankind, how they may become moſt eaſy to themſelves, moſt free from care, and enjoy the chief happineſs attainable in this world? or is it not manifeſtly owing either to this, that they have not cool and reaſonable concern enough for themſelves, to conſider wherein their chief happineſs in the preſent life conſiſts; or elſe, if they do conſider it, that they will not act conformably to what is the reſult of that conſideration: that is, reaſonable concern for themſelves, or cool ſelf-love is prevailed over by paſſion and appetite. So that from what appears, there is no ground to aſſert that thoſe principles in the nature of man, which moſt directly lead to promote the good of our fellow-creatures, are more generally or in a greater degree violated, than thoſe, which moſt directly lead us to promote our own private good and happineſs.

The ſum of the whole is plainly this. The nature of man, conſidered in this ſingle capacity, and with reſpect only to the preſent

world, is adapted and leads him to attain the greateſt happineſs he can for himſelf in the preſent world. The nature of man conſidered in his public or ſocial capacity leads him to a right behaviour in ſociety, to that courſe of life which we call virtue. Men follow or obey their nature in both theſe capacities and reſpects to a certain degree, but not intirely: their actions do not come up to the whole of what their nature leads them to in either of theſe capacities or reſpects; and they often violate their nature in both; that is, as they neglect the duties they owe to their fellow-creatures, to which their nature leads them; and are injurious, to which their nature is abhorrent; ſo there is a manifeſt negligence in men of their real happineſs or intereſt in the preſent world, when that intereſt is inconſiſtent with a preſent gratification; for the ſake of which they negligently, nay, even knowingly are the authors and inſtruments of their own miſery and ruin. Thus they are as often unjuſt to themſelves as to others, and for the moſt part are equally ſo to both by the ſame actions.

SERMON II, III.

Upon HUMAN NATURE.

ROM. ii. 14.

For when the Gentiles which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, theſe having not the law, are a law unto themſelves.

AS ſpeculative truth admits of different kinds of proof, ſo likewiſe moral obligations may be ſhewn by different methods. If the real nature of any creature leads him and is adapted to ſuch and ſuch purpoſes only, or more than any other; this is a reaſon to believe the author of that nature intended it for thoſe purpoſes. Thus there is no doubt the eye was intended for us to ſee with. And the more complex any conſtitution is, and the greater variety of parts there are which

thus tend to ſome one end, the ſtronger is the proof that ſome end was deſigned. However, when the inward frame of man is conſidered as any guide in morals, the utmoſt caution muſt be uſed that none make peculiarities in their own temper, or any thing which is the effect of peculiar cuſtoms, though obſervable in ſeveral, the ſtandard of what is common to the ſpecies; and above all, that the higheſt principle be not forgot or excluded, that to which belongs the adjuſtment and correction of all other inward movements and affections: which principle will of courſe have ſome influence, but which being in nature ſupreme, as ſhall now be ſhown, ought to preſide over and govern all the reſt. The difficulty of rightly obſerving the two former cautions; the appearance there is of ſome ſmall diverſity amongſt mankind with reſpect to this faculty, with reſpect to their natural ſenſe of moral good and evil; and the attention neceſſary to ſurvey with any exactneſs what paſſes within, have occaſioned that it is not ſo much agreed what is the ſtandard of the internal nature of man, as of his external form. Neither is this laſt ex-

actly ſettled. Yet we underſtand one another when we ſpeak of the ſhape of a human body: ſo likewiſe we do when we ſpeak of the heart and inward principles, how far ſoever the ſtandard is from being exact or preciſely fixt. There is therefor ground for an attempt of ſhewing men to themſelves, of ſhewing them what courſe of life and behaviour their real nature points out and would lead them to. Now, obligations of virtue ſhown, and motives to the practice of it enforced, from a review of the nature of man, are to be conſidered as an appeal to each particular perſon's heart and natural conſcience: as the external ſenſes are appealed to for the proof of things cognizable by them. Since then our inward feelings, and the perceptions we receive from our external ſenſes are equally real; to argue from the former to life and conduct, is as little liable to exception, as to argue from the latter to abſolute ſpeculative truth. A man can as little doubt whether his eyes were given him to ſee with, as he can doubt of the truth of the ſcience of *optics*, deduced from ocular experiments. And allowing the inward feeling,

ſhame; a man can as little doubt whether it was given him to prevent his doing ſhameful actions, as he can doubt whether his eyes were given him to guide his ſteps. And as to theſe inward feelings themſelves; that they are real, that man has in his nature paſſions and affections, can no more be queſtioned, than that he has external ſenſes. Neither can the former be wholly miſtaken; though to a certain degree liable to greater miſtakes than the latter.

THERE can be no doubt but that ſeveral propenſions, or inſtincts, ſeveral principles in the heart of man, carry him to ſociety, and to contribute to the happineſs of it, in a ſenſe and a manner in which no inward principle leads him to evil. Theſe principles, propenſions or inſtincts which lead him to do good, are approved of by a certain faculty within, quite diſtinct from theſe propenſions themſelves. All this hath been fully made out in the foregoing diſcourſe.

BUT it may be ſaid, "What is all this, "though true, to the purpoſe of virtue and "religion? Theſe require, not only that we "do good to others when we are led this way,

" by benevolence or reflection, happening to
" be ſtronger than other principles, paſſions,
" or appetites; but likewiſe that the whole
" character be formed upon thought and re-
" flection; that every action be directed by
" ſome determinate rule, ſome other rule than
" the ſtrength and prevalency of any princi-
" ple or paſſion. What ſign is there in our
" nature (for the inquiry is only about what
" is to be collected from thence) that this was
" intended by its author? Or how does ſo va-
" rious and fickle a temper as that of man ap-
" pear adapted thereto? It may indeed be ab-
" ſurd and unnatural for men to act without
" any reflection; nay, without regard to that
" particular kind of reflection which you call
" conſcience; becauſe this does belong to our
" nature. For as there never was a man but
" who approved one place, proſpect, building
" before another: ſo it does not appear that
" there ever was a man who would not have
" approved an action of humanity rather than
" of cruelty; intereſt and paſſion being quite
" out of the caſe. But intereſt and paſſion do
" come in, and are often too ſtrong for and

" prevail over reflection and conſcience. Now
" as brutes have various inſtincts, by which
" they are carried on to the end the author of
" their nature intended them for; is not man
" in the ſame condition, with this difference
" only, that to his inſtincts (that is, appetites
" and paſſions) is added the principle of re-
" flection or conſcience? And as brutes act a-
" greeable to their nature, in following that
" principle or particular inſtinct which for
" the preſent is ſtrongeſt in them; does not
" man likewiſe act agreeable to his nature, or
" obey the law of his creation, by following
" that principle, be it paſſion or conſcience,
" which for the preſent happens to be ſtrongeſt
" in him? Thus different men are by their
" particular nature hurried on to purſue ho-
" nour, or riches, or pleaſure: there are alſo
" perſons whoſe temper leads them in an un-
" common degree to kindneſs, compaſſion,
" doing good to their fellow-creatures: as
" there are others who are given to ſuſpend
" their judgment, to weigh and conſider
" things, and to act upon thought and reflec-
" tion. Let every one then quietly follow

" his nature; as paſſion, reflection, appetite,
" the ſeveral parts of it, happen to be ſtrong-
" eſt: but let not the man of virtue take
" upon him to blame the ambitious, the co-
" vetous, the diſſolute; ſince theſe equally
" with him obey and follow their nature.
" Thus, as in ſome caſes we follow our na-
" ture in doing the works *contained in the*
" *law*, ſo in other caſes, we follow nature in
" doing contrary."

Now all this licentious talk intirely goes upon a ſuppoſition, that men follow their nature in the ſame ſenſe, in violating the known rules of juſtice and honeſty for the ſake of preſent gratification, as they do in following thoſe rules when they have no temptation to the contrary. And if this were true, that could not be ſo which St. Paul aſſerts, that men are *by nature a law to themſelves*. If by following nature were meant only acting as we pleaſe, it would indeed be ridiculous to ſpeak of nature as any guide in morals: nay the very mention of deviating from nature would be abſurd; and the mention of following it, when ſpoken by way of diſtinction, would abſolutely

have no meaning. For did ever any one act otherwiſe than as he pleaſed? And yet the antients ſpeak of deviating from nature as vice; and of following nature ſo much, as a diſtinction, that according to them the perfection of virtue conſiſts therein. So that language itſelf ſhould teach people another ſenſe to the words *following nature*, than barely acting as we pleaſe. Let it however be obſerved, that though the words *human nature* are to be explained, yet the real queſtion of this diſcourſe is not concerning the meaning of words, any otherwiſe than as the explanation of them may be needful to make out and explain the aſſertion, that *every man is naturally a law to himſelf*, that *every one may find within himſelf the rule of right, and obligations to follow it*. This St. Paul affirms in the words of the text, and this the foregoing objection really denies by ſeeming to allow it. And the objection will be fully anſwered, and the text before us explained, by obſerving that *nature* is conſidered in different views, and the word uſed in different ſenſes; and by ſhewing in what view it is conſidered, and in what ſenſe the word is

uſed, when intended to expreſs and ſignify that which is the guide of life, that by which men are a law to themſelves. I ſay, the explanation of the term will be ſufficient, becauſe from thence it will appear, that in ſome ſenſes of the word, *nature* cannot be, but that in another ſenſe it manifeſtly is, a law to us.

I. By *nature* is often meant no more than ſome principle in man, without regard either to the kind or degree of it. Thus the paſſion of anger, and the affection of parents to their children, would be called equally natural. And as the ſame perſon hath often contrary principles, which at the ſame time draw contrary ways, he may by the ſame action both follow and contradict his nature in this ſenſe of the word; he may follow one paſſion and contradict another.

II. Nature is frequently ſpoken of as conſiſting of thoſe paſſions which are ſtrongeſt, and moſt influence the actions; which being vicious ones, mankind is in this ſenſe naturally vicious, or vicious by nature, Thus St. Paul ſays of the Gentiles, *who were dead in treſpaſſes and ſins, and walked according to the*

ſpirit of diſobedience, that *they were by nature the children of wrath**. They could be no otherwiſe *children of wrath* by nature, than they were vicious by nature.

HERE then are two different ſenſes of the word *nature*, in neither of which men can at all be ſaid to be a law to themſelves. They are mentioned only to be excluded; to prevent their being confounded, as the latter is in the objection, with another ſenſe of it, which is now to be enquired after, and explained.

III. THE apoſtle aſſerts, that *the gentiles do by* NATURE *the things contained in the law*. Nature is indeed here put by way of diſtinction from revelation, but yet it is not a mere negative. He intends to expreſs more than that by which they *did not*, that by which they *did* the works of the law; namely, by *nature*. It is plain the meaning of the word is not the ſame in this paſſage as in the former, where it is ſpoken of as evil; for in this latter it is ſpoken of as good; as that by which they acted, or might have acted virtuouſly. What that is in man by which he is *naturally a law*

* Epheſ. ii. 3.

to himſelf, is explained in the following words: *Which ſhew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conſcience alſo bearing witneſs, and their thoughts the mean while accuſing or elſe excuſing one another.* If there be a diſtinction to be made between the *works written in their hearts*, and the *witneſs of conſcience;* by the former muſt be meant the natural diſpoſition to kindneſs and compaſſion, to do what is of good report, to which this apoſtle often refers: that part of the nature of man, treated of in the foregoing diſcourſe, which with very little reflection and of courſe leads him to ſociety, and by means of which he naturally acts a juſt and good part in it, unleſs other paſſions or intereſt lead him aſtray. Yet ſince other paſſions, and regards to private intereſt, which lead us (though indirectly, yet they lead us) aſtray, are themſelves in a degree equally natural, and often moſt prevalent; and ſince we have no method of ſeeing the particular degrees in which one or the other is placed in us by nature; it is plain the former, conſidered merely as natural, good and right as they are, can no more be a law

to us than the latter. But there is a ſuperiour principle of reflection or conſcience in every man, which diſtinguiſhes between the internal principles of his heart, as well as his external actions: which paſſes judgment upon himſelf and them; pronounces determinately ſome actions to be in themſelves juſt, right, good; others to be in themſelves evil, wrong, unjuſt: which, without being conſulted, without being adviſed with, magiſterially exerts itſelf, and approves or condemns him the doer of them accordingly: and which, if not forcibly ſtopped, naturally and always of courſe goes on to anticipate a higher and more effectual ſentence, which ſhall hereafter ſecond and affirm its own. But this part of the office of conſcience is beyond my preſent deſign explicitely to conſider. It is by this faculty, natural to man, that he is a moral agent, that he is a law to himſelf: but this faculty, I ſay, not to be conſidered merely as a principle in his heart, which is to have ſome influence as well as others; but conſidered as a faculty in kind and in nature ſupreme over all others, and which bears its own authority of being ſo.

THIS prerogative, this natural ſupremacy, of the faculty which ſurveys, approves or diſapproves the ſeveral affections of our mind, and actions of our lives, being that by which men *are a law to themſelves*, their conformity or diſobedience to which law of our nature renders their actions, in the higheſt and moſt proper ſenſe, natural or unnatural; it is fit to be further explained to you: and I hope it will be ſo, if you will attend to the following reflections.

MAN may act according to that principle or inclination which for the preſent happens to be ſtrongeſt, and yet act in a way diſproportionate to, and violate his real proper nature. Suppoſe a brute creature by any bait to be allured into a ſnare, by which he is deſtroyed. He plainly followed the bent of his nature, leading him to gratify his appetite: there is an entire correſpondence between his whole nature and ſuch an action: ſuch action therefore is natural. But ſuppoſe a man, foreſeeing the ſame danger of certain ruin, ſhould ruſh into it for the ſake of a preſent gratification. He in this inſtance would follow his ſtrongeſt deſire, as

did the brute creature: but there would be as manifeſt a diſproportion, between the nature of a man and ſuch an action, as between the meaneſt work of art and the ſkill of the greateſt maſter in that art: which diſproportion ariſes, not from conſidering the action ſingly in itſelf, or in its conſequences; but from compariſon of it with the nature of the agent. And ſince ſuch an action is utterly diſproportionate to the nature of man, it is in the ſtricteſt and moſt proper ſenſe unnatural; this word expreſſing that diſproportion. Therefore inſtead of the words *diſproportionate to his nature*, the word, *unnatural*, may now be put; this being more familiar to us: but let it be obſerved, that it ſtands for the ſame thing preciſely.

Now, what is it which renders ſuch a raſh action unnatural? Is it that he went againſt the principle of reaſonable and cool ſelf-love, conſidered merely as a part of his nature? no: for if he had acted the contrary way, he would equally have gone againſt a principle or part of his nature, namely, paſſion or appetite. But to deny a preſent appetite, from foreſight that the gratification of it would end in immediate

ruin or extreme miſery, is by no means an unnatural action: whereas to contradict or go againſt cool ſelf-love for the ſake of ſuch gratification, is ſo in the inſtance before us. Such an action then being unnatural; and its being ſo, not ariſing from a man's going againſt a principle or deſire barely, nor in going againſt that principle or deſire which happens for the preſent to be ſtrongeſt; it neceſſarily follows, that there muſt be ſome other difference or diſtinction to be made between theſe two principles, paſſion and cool ſelf-love, than what I have yet taken notice of. And this difference, not being a difference in ſtrength or degree, I call a difference in *nature* and in *kind*. And ſince, in the inſtance ſtill before us, if paſſion prevails over ſelf-love, the conſequent action is unnatural; but if ſelf-love prevails over paſſion, the action is natural: it is manifeſt that ſelf-love is in human nature a ſuperiour principle to paſſion. This may be contradicted without violating that nature; but the former cannot. So that, if we will act conformably to the oeconomy of man's nature, reaſonable ſelf-

love muſt govern. Thus, without particular conſideration of conſcience, we may have a clear conception of the ſuperiour nature of one inward principle to another; and ſee that there really is this natural ſuperiority, quite diſtinct from degrees of ſtrength and prevalency.

Let us now take a view of the nature of man, as conſiſting partly of various appetites, paſſions, affections, and partly of the principle of reflection or conſcience; leaving quite out all conſideration of the different degrees of ſtrength, in which either of them prevail, and it will farther appear that there is this natural ſuperiority of one inward principle to another, and that it is even part of the idea of reflection or conſcience.

Passion or appetite implies a direct ſimple tendency towards ſuch and ſuch objects, without diſtinction of the means by which they are to be obtained. Conſequently it will often happen there will be a deſire of particular objects, in caſes where they cannot be obtained without manifeſt injury to others. Reflection or conſcience comes in, and diſapproves the

purſuit of them in theſe circumſtances; but the deſire remains. Which is to be obeyed, appetite or reflection? Cannot this queſtion be anſwered from the oeconomy and conſtitution of human nature merely, without ſaying which is ſtrongeſt? Or need this at all come into conſideration? Would not the queſtion be intelligibly and fully anſwered by ſaying, that the principle of reflection or conſcience being compared with the various appetites, paſſions, and affections in men, the former is manifeſtly ſuperiour and chief, without regard to ſtrength? And how often ſoever the latter happens to prevail, it is mere uſurpation: the former remains in nature and in kind its ſuperiour; and every inſtance of ſuch prevalence of the latter is an inſtance of breaking in upon and violation of the conſtitution of man.

All this is no more than the diſtinction, which every body is acquainted with, between mere power and authority: only, inſtead of being intended to expreſs the difference between what is poſſible, and what is lawful in civil government; here it has been ſhewn applicable to the ſeveral principles in the mind of

man. Thus that principle, by which we ſurvey, and either approve or diſapprove our own heart, temper and actions, is not only to be conſidered as what is in its turn to have ſome influence; which may be ſaid of every paſſion, of the loweſt appetites: but likewiſe of being ſuperiour; as from its very nature manifeſtly claiming ſuperiority over all others: inſomuch that you cannot form a notion of this faculty, conſcience, without taking in judgment, direction, ſuperintendency. This is a conſtituent part of the idea, that is, of the faculty itſelf: and, to preſide and govern, from the very oeconomy and conſtitution of man, belongs to it. Had it ſtrength, as it has right; had it power, as it has manifeſt authority; it would abſolutely govern the world.

THIS gives us a farther view of the nature of man; ſhews us what courſe of life we were made for: not only that our real nature leads us to be influenced in ſome degree by reflection and conſcience; but likewiſe in what degree we are to be influenced by it, if we will fall in with, and act agreeable to the conſtitution of our nature: that this faculty was placed

within to be our proper governor; to direct and regulate all under principles, paſſions, and motives of action. This is its right and office: thus ſacred is its authority. And how often ſoever men violate and rebelliouſly refuſe to ſubmit to it, for ſuppoſed intereſt which they cannot otherwiſe obtain, or for the ſake of paſſion which they cannot otherwiſe gratify; this makes no alteration as to the natural right and office of conſcience.

Let us now turn this whole matter another way, and ſuppoſe there was no ſuch thing at all as this natural ſupremacy of conſcience; that there was no diſtinction to be made between one inward principle and another, but only that of ſtrength; and ſee what would be the conſequence.

Consider then, what is the latitude and compaſs of the actions of man with regard to himſelf, his fellow-creatures, and the Supreme Being? what are their bounds, beſides that of our natural power? With reſpect to the two firſt, they are plainly no other than theſe: no man ſeeks miſery as ſuch for himſelf; and no one unprovoked does miſchief to another for

its own ſake. For in every degree within theſe bounds, mankind knowingly from paſſion or wantonneſs bring ruin and miſery upon themſelves and others. And impiety and prophaneneſs, I mean what every one would call ſo who believes the being of a God, have abſolutely no bounds at all. Men blaſpheme the author of nature formally, and in words renounce their allegiance to their Creator. Put an inſtance then with reſpect to any of theſe three. Though we ſhould ſuppoſe prophane ſwearing, and in general that kind of impiety now mentioned, to mean nothing, yet it implies wanton diſregard and irreverence towards an infinite Being our Creator; and is this as ſuitable to the nature of man, as reverence and dutiful ſubmiſſion of heart towards that Almighty Being? Or ſuppoſe a man guilty of parricide, with all the circumſtances of cruelty which ſuch an action can admit of. This action is done in conſequence of its principle being for the preſent ſtrongeſt: and if there be no difference between inward principles, but only that of ſtrength; the ſtrength being given, you have the whole nature of the man given, ſo far as it relates to

this matter. The action plainly correſponds to the principle, the principle being in that degree of ſtrength it was: it therefor correſponds to the whole nature of the man. Upon comparing the action and the whole nature, there ariſes no diſproportion, there appears no unſuitableneſs between them. Thus the murder of a father and the nature of man correſpond to each other, as the ſame nature and an act of filial duty. If there be no difference between inward principles, but only that of ſtrength; we can make no diſtinction between theſe two actions, conſidered as the actions of ſuch a creature; but in our cooleſt hours muſt approve or diſapprove them equally: than which nothing can be reduced to a greater abſurdity.

THE natural ſupremacy of reflection or conſcience being thus eſtabliſhed; we may from it form a diſtinct notion of what is meant by *human nature*, when virtue is ſaid to conſiſt in following it, and vice in deviating from it.

As the idea of a civil conſtitution implies in it united ſtrength, various ſubordinations, un-

der one direction, that of the ſupreme authority; the different ſtrength of each particular member of the ſociety not coming into the idea; whereas, if you leave out the ſubordination, the union and the one direction, you deſtroy and loſe it: ſo reaſon, ſeveral appetites, paſſions and affections, prevailing in different degrees of ſtrength, is not that idea or notion of human nature; but that nature conſiſts in theſe ſeveral principles conſidered as having a natural reſpect to each other, in the ſeveral paſſions being naturally ſubordinate to the one ſuperiour principle of reflection or conſcience. Every bias, inſtinct, propenſion within, is a real part of our nature, but not the whole: add to theſe the ſuperior faculty, whoſe office it is to adjuſt, manage and preſide over them, and take in this its natural ſuperiority, and you complete the idea of human nature. And as in civil government the conſtitution is broken in upon and violated by power and ſtrength prevailing over authority; ſo the conſtitution of man is broken in upon and violated by the lower faculties or principles within prevailing over that which is in its nature ſupreme over

them all. Thus when it is ſaid by ancient writers, that tortures and death are not ſo contrary to human nature as injuſtice; by this to be ſure is not meant, that the averſion to the former in mankind is leſs ſtrong and prevalent than their averſion to the latter: but that the former is only contrary to our nature conſidered in a partial view, and which takes in only the loweſt part of it, that which we have in common with the brutes; whereas the latter is contrary to our nature, conſidered in a higher ſenſe, as a ſyſtem and conſtitution, contrary to the whole oeconomy of man*.

* Every man in his phyſical nature is one individual ſingle agent. He has likewiſe properties and principles, each of which may be conſidered ſeparately, and without regard to the reſpects which they have to each other. Neither of theſe are the nature we are taking a view of. But it is the inward frame of man conſidered as *a ſyſtem* or *conſtitution*: whoſe ſeveral parts are united, not by a phyſical principle of individuation, but by the reſpects they have to each other; the chief of which is the ſubjection which the appetites, paſſions, and particular affections have to the one ſupreme principle of reflection or conſcience. The ſyſtem or conſtitution

AND from all theſe things put together, nothing can be more evident, than that, excluſive

is formed by and conſiſts in theſe reſpects and this ſubjection. Thus the body is a *ſyſtem* or *conſtitution*: ſo is a tree: ſo is every machine. Conſider all the ſeveral parts of a tree without the natural reſpects they have to each other, and you have not at all the idea of a tree; but add theſe reſpects, and this gives you the idea. The body may be impaired by ſickneſs, a tree may decay, a machine be out of order, and yet the ſyſtem and conſtitution of them not totally diſſolved. There is plainly ſomewhat which anſwers to all this in the moral conſtitution of man. Whoever will conſider his own nature, will ſee that the ſeveral appetites, paſſions, and particular affections, have different reſpects among themſelves. They are reſtraints upon, and are in a proportion to each other. This proportion is juſt and perfect, when all thoſe inward principles are perfectly coincident with conſcience, ſo far as their nature permits, and in all caſes under its abſolute and intire direction. The leaſt exceſs or defect, the leaſt alteration of the due proportions amongſt themſelves, or of their coincidence with conſcience, though not proceeding into action, is ſome degree of diſorder in the moral conſtitution. But perfection, though plainly intelligible and ſuppoſeable, was never attained by any man. If the higher principle of reflection maintains its place, and as much as it can corrects that diſorder,

of revelation, man cannot be conſidered as a creature left by his Maker to act at random, and live at large up to the extent of his natural power, as paſſion, humour, wilfulneſs, happen to carry him; which is the condition brute creatures are in: but that *from his make, conſtitution, or nature, he is in the ſtricteſt and moſt proper ſenſe a law to himſelf.* He hath the rule of right within; what is wanting is only that he honeſtly attend to it.

THE inquiries which have been made by men of leiſure after ſome general rule, the conformity to, or diſagreement from which, ſhould denominate our actions good or evil, are in many reſpects of great ſervice. Yet let any plain honeſt man, before he engages in

and hinders it from breaking out into action, this is all that can be expected in ſuch a creature as man. And though the appetites and paſſions have not their exact due proportion to each other; though they often ſtrive for maſtery with judgment or reflection; yet ſince the ſuperiority of this principle to all others is the chief reſpect which forms the conſtitution, ſo far as this ſuperiority is maintained, the character, the man, is good, worthy, virtuous.

any courſe of action, aſk himſelf, Is this I am going about right, or is it wrong? Is it good, or is it evil? I do not in the leaſt doubt but that this queſtion would be anſwered agreeably to truth and virtue, by almoſt any fair man in almoſt any circumſtance. Neither do there appear any caſes which look like exceptions to this; but thoſe of ſuperſtition, and of partiality to ourſelves. Superſtition may perhaps be ſomewhat of an exception: but partiality to ourſelves is not; this being itſelf diſhoneſty. For a man to judge that to be the equitable, the moderate, the right part for him to act, which he would ſee to be hard, unjuſt, oppreſſive in another; this is plain vice, and can proceed only from great unfairneſs of mind.

But allowing that mankind hath the rule of right within himſelf, yet it may be aſked, "What obligations are we under to attend to "and follow it?" I anſwer: it has been proved that man by his nature is a law to himſelf, without the particular diſtinct conſideration of the poſitive ſanctions of that law; the rewards and puniſhments which we feel, and thoſe which from the light of reaſon we have ground

to believe, are annexed to it. The queſtion then carries its own anſwer along with it. Your obligation to obey this law is its being the law of your nature. That your conſcience approves of and atteſts to ſuch a courſe of action, is itſelf alone an obligation. Conſcience does not only offer itſelf to ſhew us the way we ſhould walk in, but it likewiſe carries its own authority with it, that it is our natural guide: the guide aſſigned us by the author of our nature: it therefor belongs to our condition of being, it is our duty, to walk in that path and follow this guide without looking about to ſee whether we may not poſſibly forſake them with impunity.

However, let us hear what is to be ſaid againſt obeying this law of our nature. And the ſum is no more than this. "Why ſhould "we be concerned about any thing out of and "beyond ourſelves? If we do find within our- "ſelves regards to others, and reſtraints of "we know not how many different kinds; "yet theſe being embarraſſments, and hinder- "ing us from going the neareſt way to our

" good, why ſhould we not endeavour to ſup-
" preſs and get over them?"

Thus people go on with words, which, when applied to human nature, and the condition in which it is placed in this world, have really no meaning. For does not all this kind of talk go upon ſuppoſition, that our happineſs in this world conſiſts in ſomewhat quite diſtinct from regards to others; and that it is the privilege of vice to be without reſtraint or confinement? Whereas on the contrary, the enjoyments, in a manner all the common enjoyments of life, even the pleaſures of vice, depend upon theſe regards of one kind or another to our fellow-creatures. Throw off all regards to others, and we ſhould be quite indifferent to infamy and to honour; there could be no ſuch thing at all as ambition; and ſcarce any ſuch thing as covetouſneſs; for we ſhould likewiſe be equally indifferent to the diſgrace of poverty, the ſeveral neglects and kinds of contempt which accompany this ſtate; and to the reputation of riches, the regard and reſpect they uſually procure. Neither is reſtraint by any means peculiar to one courſe of life: but our

very nature, excluſive of conſcience, and our condition lays us under an abſolute neceſſity of it. We cannot gain any end whatever without being confined to the proper means, which is often the moſt painful and uneaſy confinement. And in numberleſs inſtances a preſent appetite cannot be gratified without ſuch apparent and immediate ruin and miſery, that the moſt diſſolute man in the world chooſes to forego the pleaſure, rather than endure the pain.

Is the meaning then, to indulge thoſe regards to our fellow-creatures, and ſubmit to thoſe reſtraints, which upon the whole are attended with more ſatisfaction than eneaſineſs, and get over only thoſe which bring more uneaſineſs and inconvenience than ſatisfaction? "Doubtleſs this was our meaning." You have changed ſides then. Keep to this; be conſiſtent with yourſelves; and you and the men of virtue are in general perfectly agreed. But let us take care and avoid miſtakes. Let it not be taken for granted that the temper of envy, rage, reſentment, yields greater delight than meekneſs, forgiveneſs, compaſſion and

good-will: eſpecially when it is acknowleged that rage, envy, reſentment, are in themſelves mere miſery; and the ſatisfaction ariſing from the indulgence of them is little more than relief from that miſery; whereas the temper of compaſſion and benevolence is itſelf delightful; and the indulgence of it, by doing good, affords new poſitive delight and enjoyment. Let it not be taken for granted, that the ſatisfaction ariſing from the reputation of riches and power however obtained, and from the reſpect paid to them, is greater than the ſatisfaction ariſing from the reputation of juſtice, honeſty, charity, and the eſteem which is univerſally acknowleged to be their due. And if it be doubtful which of theſe ſatisfactions is the greateſt, as there are perſons who think neither of them very conſiderable, yet there can be no doubt concerning ambition and covetouſneſs, virtue and a good mind, conſidered in themſelves, and as leading to different courſes of life; there can, I ſay, be no doubt, which temper and which courſe is attended with moſt peace and tranquillity of mind, which with moſt perplexity, vexation and inconvenience. And both

the virtues and vices, which have been now mentioned, do in a manner equally imply in them regards of one kind or another to our fellow-creatures. And with reſpect to reſtraint and confinement; whoever will conſider the reſtraints from fear and ſhame, the diſſimulation, mean arts of concealment, ſervile compliances, one or other of which belong to almoſt every courſe of vice; will ſoon be convinced that the man of virtue is by no means upon a diſadvantage in this reſpect. How many inſtances are there in which men feel and own and cry aloud under the chains of vice with which they are enthralled, and which yet they will not ſhake off! How many inſtances, in which perſons manifeſtly go through more pains and ſelf-denial to gratify a vitious paſſion, than would have been neceſſary to the conqueſt of it! To this is to be added, that when virtue is become habitual, when the temper of it is acquired, what was before confinement ceaſes to be ſo, by becoming choice and delight. Whatever reſtraint and guard upon ourſelves may be needful to unlearn any unna-

tural diſtortion or odd geſture; yet in all propriety of ſpeech, natural behaviour muſt be the moſt eaſy and unreſtrained. It is manifeſt that, in the common courſe of life, there is ſeldom any inconſiſtency between our duty and what is called intereſt: it is much ſeldomer that there is an inconſiſtency between duty and what is really our preſent intereſt; meaning by intereſt, happineſs and ſatisfaction. Self-love then, though confined to the intereſt of the preſent world, does in general perfectly coincide with virtue; and leads us to one and the ſame courſe of life. But, whatever exceptions there are to this, which are much fewer than they are commonly thought, all ſhall be ſet right at the final diſtribution of things. It is a manifeſt abſurdity to ſuppoſe evil prevailing finally over good, under the conduct and adminiſtration of a perfect mind.

THE whole argument, which I have been now inſiſting upon, may be thus ſummed up and given you in one view. The nature of man is adapted to ſome courſe of action or other. Upon comparing ſome actions with this nature, they appear ſuitable and correſpondent

to it: from compariſon of other actions with the ſame nature, there ariſes to our view ſome unſuitableneſs or diſproportion. The correſpondence of actions to the nature of the agent renders them natural: their diſproportion to it, unnatural. That an action is correſpondent to the nature of the agent, does not ariſe from its being agreeable to the principle which happens to be the ſtrongeſt: for it may be ſo, and yet be quite diſproportionate to the nature of the agent. The correſpondence therefor, or diſproportion, ariſes from ſomewhat elſe. This can be nothing but a difference in nature and kind (altogether diſtinct from ſtrength) between the inward principles. Some then are in nature and kind ſuperior to others. And the correſpondence ariſes from the action being conformable to the higher principle; and the unſuitableneſs from its being contrary to it. Reaſonable ſelf-love and conſcience are the chief or ſuperiour principles in the nature of man: becauſe an action may be ſuitable to this nature, though all other principles be violated; but becomes unſuitable, if either of thoſe are. Conſcience and ſelf-love, if we underſtand our

true happineſs, always lead us the ſame way. Duty and intereſt are perfectly coincident; for the moſt part in this world, but intirely and in every inſtance if we take in the future, and the whole; this being implied in the notion of a good and perfect adminiſtration of things. Thus they who have been ſo wiſe in their generation as to regard only their own ſuppoſed intereſt, at the expence and to the injury of others, ſhall at laſt find, that he who has given up all the advantages of the preſent world, rather than violate his conſcience and the relations of life, has infinitely better provided for himſelf, and ſecured his own intereſt and happineſs.

SERMON IV.

Upon the GOVERNMENT of the TONGUE.

JAMES i. 26.

If any man among you ſeem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man's religion is vain.

THE tranſlation of this text would be more determinate by being more literal, thus: *If any man among you ſeemeth to be religious, not bridling his tongue, but deceiving his own heart, this man's religion is vain.* This determines that the words, *but deceiveth his own heart*, are not put in oppoſition to, *ſeemeth to be religious*, but to, *bridleth not his tongue*. The certain determinate meaning of

the text then being, that he who ſeemeth to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but in that particular deceiveth his own heart, this man's religion is vain; we may obſerve ſomewhat very forcible and expreſſive in theſe words of St. James. As if the apoſtle had ſaid, No man ſurely can make any pretences to religion, who does not at leaſt believe that he bridleth his tongue: if he puts on any appearance or face of religion, and yet does not govern his tongue, he muſt ſurely deceive himſelf in that particular, and think he does: and whoever is ſo unhappy as to deceive himſelf in this, to imagine he keeps that unruly faculty in due ſubjection, when indeed he does not, whatever the other part of his life be, his religion is vain; the government of the tongue being a moſt material reſtraint which virtue lay us under: without it no man can be truly religious.

In treating upon this ſubject, I will conſider,

Firſt, What is the general vice or fault here referred to: or what diſpoſition in men is

ſuppoſed in moral reflections and precepts concerning *bridling the tongue*.

Secondly, WHEN it may be ſaid of any one, that he has a due government over himſelf in this reſpect.

I. Now the fault referred to, and the diſpoſition ſuppoſed, in precepts and reflections concerning the government of the tongue, is not evil-ſpeaking from malice, nor lying or bearing falſe witneſs from indirect ſelfiſh deſigns. The diſpoſition to theſe, and the actual vices themſelves, all come under other ſubjects. The tongue may be employed about and made to ſerve all the purpoſes of vice, in tempting and deceiving, in perjury and injuſtice. But the thing here ſuppoſed and referred to, is talkativeneſs: a diſpoſition to be talking, abſtracted from the conſideration of what is to be ſaid; with very little or no regard to, or thought of doing, either good or harm. And let not any imagine this to be a ſlight matter, and that it deſerves not to have ſo great weight laid upon it; till he has conſidered, what evil is implied in it, and the bad effects which follow from it. It is perhaps true, that they

who are addicted to this folly would chuſe to confine themſelves to trifles and indifferent ſubjects, and ſo intend only to be guilty of being impertinent: but as they cannot go on for ever talking of nothing, as common matters will not afford a ſufficient fund for perpetual continued diſcourſe: when ſubjects of this kind are exhauſted, they will go on to defamation, ſcandal, divulging of ſecrets, their own ſecrets as well as thoſe of others, any thing rather than be ſilent. They are plainly hurried on in the heat of their talk to ſay quite different things from what they firſt intended, and which they afterwards wiſh unſaid; or improper things, which they had no other end in ſaying but only to afford employment to their tongue. And if theſe people expect to be heard and regarded, for there are ſome content merely with talking, they will invent to engage your attention: and when they have heard the leaſt imperfect hint of an affair, they will out of their own head add the circumſtances of time and place, and other matters to make out their ſtory, and give the appearance of probability to it: not that they have any concern

about being believed, otherwiſe than as a means of being heard. The thing is, to engage your attention; to take you up wholly for the preſent time: what reflections will be made afterwards, is in truth the leaſt of their thoughts. And further; when perſons, who indulge themſelves in theſe liberties of the tongue, are in any degree offended with another, as little diſguſts and miſunderſtandings will be, they allow themſelves to defame and revile ſuch an one without any moderation or bounds; tho' the offence is ſo very ſlight, that they themſelves would not do, nor perhaps wiſh, him an injury in any other way. And in this caſe the ſcandal and revilings are chiefly owing to talkativeneſs, and not bridling their tongue; and ſo come under our preſent ſubject. The leaſt occaſion in the world will make the humour break out in this particular way, or in another. It is like a torrent, which muſt and will flow; but the leaſt thing imaginable will firſt of all give it either this or another direction, turn it into this or that channel: or like a fire; the nature of which, when in a heap of combuſtible matter,

is to ſpread and lay waſte all around; but any one of a thouſand little accidents will occaſion it to break out firſt either in this or another particular part.

THE ſubject then before us, though it does run up into, and can ſcarce be treated as intirely diſtinct from all others; yet it needs not be ſo much mixed or blended with them as it often is. Every faculty and power may be uſed as the inſtrument of premeditated vice and wickedneſs, merely as the moſt proper and effectual means of executing ſuch deſigns. But if a man, from deep malice and deſire of revenge, ſhould meditate a falſehood with a ſettled deſign to ruin his neighbour's reputation, and ſhould with great coolneſs and deliberation ſpread it; no body would chuſe to ſay of ſuch an one, that he had no government of his tongue. A man may uſe the faculty of ſpeech as an inſtrument of falſe-witneſs, who yet has ſo entire a command over that faculty, as never to ſpeak but from forethought and cool deſign. Here the crime is injuſtice and perjury: and, ſtrictly ſpeaking, no more belongs to the pre-

ſent ſubject, than perjury and injuſtice in any other way. But there is ſuch a thing as a diſpoſition to be talking for its own ſake; from which perſons often ſay any thing, good or bad, of others, merely as a ſubject of diſcourſe, according to the particular temper they themſelves happen to be in, and to paſs away the preſent time. There is likewiſe to be obſerved in perſons ſuch a ſtrong and eager deſire of engaging attention to what they ſay, that they will ſpeak good or evil, truth or otherwiſe, merely as one or the other ſeems to be moſt hearkened to: and this, though it is ſometimes joined, is not the ſame with the deſire of being thought important and men of conſequence. There is in ſome ſuch a diſpoſition to be talking, that an offence of the ſlighteſt kind, and ſuch as would not raiſe any other reſentment, yet raiſes, if I may ſo ſpeak, the reſentment of the tongue, puts it into a flame, into the moſt ungovernable motions. This outrage, when the perſon it reſpects is preſent, we diſtinguiſh in the lower rank of people by a peculiar term: and let it be obſerved, that though the decencies of behaviour are a little kept; the

ſame outrage and virulence, indulged when he is abſent, is an offence of the ſame kind. But not to diſtinguiſh any further in this manner: men run into faults and follies, which cannot ſo properly be referred to any one general head as this, that they have not a due government over their tongue.

And this unreſtrained volubility and wantonneſs of ſpeech is the occaſion of numberleſs evils and vexations in life. It begets reſentment in him who is the ſubject of it; ſows the ſeed of ſtrife and diſſention amongſt others; and inflames little diſguſts and offences, which if let alone would wear away of themſelves: it is often of as bad effect upon the good name of others, as deep envy or malice: and, to ſay the leaſt of it in this reſpect, it deſtroys and perverts a certain equity of the utmoſt importance to ſociety to be obſerved; namely, that praiſe and diſpraiſe, a good or bad character, ſhould always be beſtowed according to deſert. The tongue uſed in ſuch a licentious manner is like a ſword in the hand of a madman; it is employed at random, it can ſcarce poſſibly do any good, and for the moſt part does a world

of miſchief; and implies not only great folly and a trifling ſpirit, but great vitiouſneſs of mind, great indifference to truth and falſity, and to the reputation, welfare, and good of others. So much reaſon is there for what St. James ſays of the tongue, * *It is a fire, a world of iniquity, it defileth the whole body, ſetteth on fire the courſe of nature, and is itſelf ſet on fire of hell.* This is the faculty or diſpoſition which we are required to keep a guard upon: theſe are the vices and follies it runs into, when not kept under due reſtraint.

II. WHEREIN the due government of the tongue conſiſts, or when it may be ſaid of any one in a moral and religious ſenſe that he *bridleth his tongue*, I come now to conſider.

THE due and proper uſe of any natural faculty or power, is to be judged of by the end and deſign, for which it was given us. The chief purpoſe, for which the faculty of ſpeech was given to man, is plainly that we might communicate our thoughts to each other, in order to carry on the affairs of the world; for buſineſs, and for our improvement in know-

* Chap. iii. v. 6.

lege and learning. But the good author of our nature deſigned us not only neceſſaries, but likewiſe enjoyment and ſatisfaction, in that being he hath graciouſly given, and in that condition of life he hath placed us in. There are ſecondary uſes of our faculties: they adminiſter to delight, as well as to neceſſity: and as they are equally adapted to both, there is no doubt but he intended them for our gratification, as well as for the ſupport and continuance of our being. The ſecondary uſe of ſpeech is to pleaſe and to entertain each other in converſation. This is in every reſpect allowable and right: it unites men cloſer in alliances and friendſhips; gives us a fellow-feeling of the proſperity and unhappineſs of each other; and is in ſeveral reſpects ſerviceable to virtue, and to promote good behaviour in the world. And provided there be not too much time ſpent in it, if it were conſidered only in the way of gratification and delight, men muſt have ſtrange notions of God and religion, to think that He can be offended with it, or that it is any way inconſiſtent with the ſtricteſt virtue. But the truth is, ſuch ſort of converſati-

on, though it has no particular good tendency, yet it has a general good one: it is ſocial and friendly; and tends to promote humanity, good-nature and civility.

As the end and uſe, ſo likewiſe the abuſe of ſpeech, relates to the one or other of theſe; either to buſineſs, or to converſation. As to the former; deceit in the management of buſineſs and affairs does not properly belong to the ſubject now before us: though one may juſt mention that multitude, that endleſs number of words, with which buſineſs is perplexed; when a much fewer would, as it ſhould ſeem, better ſerve the purpoſe: but this muſt be left to thoſe who underſtand the matter. The government of the tongue, conſidered as a ſubject of itſelf, relates chiefly to converſation; to that kind of diſcourſe which uſually fills up the time ſpent in friendly meetings, and viſits of civility. And the danger is, leſt perſons entertain themſelves and others at the expence of their wiſdom and their virtue, and to the injury or offence of their neighbour. If they will obſerve and keep clear of theſe, they may

be as free, and eaſy, and unreſerved, as they can deſire.

THE cautions to be given for avoiding theſe dangers, and to render converſation innocent and agreeable, fall under the following particulars: ſilence; talking of indifferent things; and, which makes up too great a part of converſation, giving of characters, ſpeaking well or evil of others.

THE wiſe man obſerves, that *there is a time to ſpeak, and a time to keep ſilence.* One meets with people in the world, who ſeem never to have made the laſt of theſe obſervations. And yet theſe great talkers do not at all ſpeak from their having any thing to ſay, as every ſentence ſhews, but only from their inclination to be talking. Their converſation is merely an exerciſe of the tongue: no other human faculty has any ſhare in it. It is ſtrange theſe perſons can help reflecting, that unleſs they have in truth a ſuperiour capacity, and are in an extraordinary manner furniſhed for converſation; if they are entertaining, it is at their own expence. Is it poſſible, that it ſhould never come into people's thoughts to ſuſpect,

whether or no it be to their advantage to ſhew ſo very much of themſelves? *O that you would altogether hold your peace, and it ſhould be your wiſdom*!* Remember likewiſe there are perſons who love fewer words, an inoffenſive ſort of people, and who deſerve ſome regard, though of too ſtill and compoſed tempers for you. Of this number was the ſon of Sirach: for he plainly ſpeaks from experience, when he ſays, *As hills of ſand are to the ſteps of the aged, ſo is one of many words to a quiet man.* But one would think it ſhould be obvious to every one, that when they are in company with their ſuperiors of any kind, in years, knowlege and experience; when proper and uſeful ſubjects are diſcourſed of, which they cannot bear a part in; that theſe are times for ſilence: when they ſhould learn to hear, and be attentive; at leaſt in their turn. It is indeed a very unhappy way theſe people are in: they in a manner cut themſelves out from all advantage of converſation, except that of being entertained with their own talk: their buſineſs in coming into company not being at all to be informed,

* Job. xiii.

to hear, to learn; but to diſplay themſelves; or rather to exert their faculty, and talk without any deſign at all. And if we conſider converſation, as an entertainment, as ſomewhat to unbend the mind; as a diverſion from the cares, the buſineſs, and the ſorrows of life; it is of the very nature of it, that the diſcourſe be mutual. This, I ſay, is implied in the very notion of what we diſtinguiſh by converſation, or being in company. Attention to the continued diſcourſe of one alone grows more painful often, than the cares and buſineſs we come to be diverted from. He therefor who impoſes this upon us, is guilty of a double offence; arbitrarily enjoining ſilence upon all the reſt, and likewiſe obliging them to this painful attention.

I AM ſenſible theſe things are apt to be paſſed over, as too little to come into a ſerious diſcourſe: but in reality men are obliged, even in point of morality and virtue, to obſerve all the decencies of behaviour. The greateſt evils in life have had their riſe from ſomewhat, which was thought of too little importance to be attended to. And as to the matter we are

now upon, it is abſolutely neceſſary to be conſidered. For if people will not maintain a due government over themſelves, in regarding proper times and ſeaſons for ſilence, but will be talking; they certainly, whether they deſign it or not at firſt, will go on to ſcandal and evil-ſpeaking, and divulging ſecrets.

If it were needful to ſay any thing further, to perſuade men to learn this leſſon of ſilence; one might put them in mind, how inſignificant they render themſelves by this exceſſive talkativeneſs: inſomuch, that if they chance to ſay any thing which deſerves to be attended to and regarded, it is loſt in the variety and abundance which they utter of another ſort.

The occaſions of ſilence then are obvious, and one would think ſhould be eaſily diſtinguiſhed by every body: namely, when a man has nothing to ſay; or nothing, but what is better unſaid; better, either in regard to the particular perſons he is preſent with; or from its being an interruption to converſation itſelf; or to converſation of a more agreeable kind; or better, laſtly, with regard to himſelf. I will end this particular with two reflections of the

wiſe man: one of which, in the ſtrongeſt manner, expoſes the ridiculous part of this licentiouſneſs of the tongue; and the other, the great danger and vitiouſneſs of it. *When he that is a fool walketh by the way ſide, his wiſdom faileth him, and he ſaith to every one that he is a fool* *. The other is, *in the multitude of words there wanteth not ſin* †.

As to the government of the tongue in reſpect to talking upon indifferent ſubjects: after what has been ſaid concerning the due government of it in reſpect to the occaſions and times for ſilence, there is little more neceſſary, than only to caution men to be fully ſatisfied, that the ſubjects are indeed of an indifferent nature; and not to ſpend too much time in converſation of this kind. But perſons muſt be ſure to take heed, that the ſubject of their diſcourſe be at leaſt of an indifferent nature: that it be not of a licentious diſſolute ſort, this leaving always ill impreſſions upon the mind; that it be no way injurious or vexatious to others; and that too much time be not ſpent this way, to the neglect of thoſe duties and offices of life

* Eccleſ. x. iii. † Prov. x. 19.

which belong to their ſtation and condition in the world. However, though there is not any neceſſity, that men ſhould aim at being important and weighty in every ſentence they ſpeak: yet ſince uſeful ſubjects, at leaſt of ſome kinds, are as entertaining as others; a wiſe man, even when he deſires to unbend his mind from buſineſs, would chuſe that the converſation might turn upon ſomething inſtructive.

The laſt thing is, the government of the tongue as relating to diſcourſe of the affairs of others, and giving of characters. Theſe are in a manner the ſame: and one can ſcarce call it an indifferent ſubject, becauſe diſcourſe upon it almoſt perpetually runs into ſomewhat criminal.

And firſt of all, it were very much to be wiſhed that this did not take up ſo great a part of converſation; becauſe it is indeed a ſubject of a dangerous nature. Let any one conſider the various intereſts, competitions, and little miſunderſtandings which ariſe amongſt men; and he will ſoon ſee, that he is not unprejudiced and impartial, that he is not, as I may

ſpeak, neutral enough, to truſt himſelf with talking of the character and concerns of his neighbour, in a free, careleſs, and unreſerved manner. There is perpetually, and often it is not attended to, a rivalſhip amongſt people of one kind or another, in reſpect to wit, beauty, learning, fortune; and that one thing will inſenſibly influence them to ſpeak to the diſadvantage of others, even where there is no formed malice or ill deſign. Since therefor it is ſo hard to enter into this ſubject without offending; the firſt thing to be obſerved is, that people ſhould learn to decline it; to get over that ſtrong inclination moſt have to be talking of the concerns and behaviour of their neighbour.

But ſince it is impoſſible that this ſubject ſhould be wholly excluded converſation; and ſince it is neceſſary that the characters of men ſhould be known: the next thing is, that it is a matter of importance what is ſaid; and therefor, that we ſhould be religiouſly ſcrupulous and exact to ſay nothing, either good or bad, but what is true. I put it thus, becauſe it is

in reality of as great importance to the good of ſociety, that the characters of bad men ſhould be known, as that the characters of good men ſhould. People, who are given to ſcandal and detraction, may indeed make an ill uſe of this obſervation: but truths, which are of ſervice towards regulating our conduct, are not to be diſowned, or even concealed, becauſe a bad uſe may be made of them. This however would be effectually prevented, if theſe two things were attended to. *Firſt*, That, though it is equally of bad conſequence to ſociety, that men ſhould have either good or ill characters which they do not deſerve; yet, when you ſay ſomewhat good of a man which he does not deſerve, there is no wrong done him in particular; whereas when you ſay evil of a man which he does not deſerve, here is a direct formal injury, a real piece of injuſtice, done him. This therefor makes a wide difference; and gives us in point of virtue, much greater latitude of ſpeaking well, than ill, of others. *Secondly*, A good man is friendly to his fellow-creatures, and a lover of mankind; and ſo will, upon every occaſion, and often

without any, ſay all the good he can of every body: but, ſo far as he is a good man, will never de diſpoſed to ſpeak evil of any, unleſs there be ſome other reaſon for it, beſides barely that it is true. If he be charged with having given an ill character, he will ſcarce think it a ſufficient juſtification of himſelf to ſay it was a true one; unleſs he can alſo give ſome farther account how he came to do ſo: a juſt indignation againſt particular inſtances of villany, where they are great and ſcandalous; or to prevent an innocent man from being deceived and betrayed, when he has great truſt and confidence in one who does not deſerve it. Juſtice muſt be done to every part of a ſubject, when we are conſidering it. If there be a man, who bears a fair character in the world, whom yet we know to be without faith or honeſty, to be really an ill man; it muſt be allowed in general, that we ſhall do a piece of ſervice to ſociety, by letting ſuch an one's true character be known. This is no more, than what we have an inſtance of in our Saviour himſelf*; though he was mild and gentle beyond example.

* Mark xii. 38, 40.

However, no words can expreſs too ſtrongly the caution which ſhould be uſed in ſuch a caſe as this.

UPON the whole matter: if people would obſerve the obvious occaſions of ſilence; if they would ſubdue the inclination to tale-bearing; and that eager deſire to engage attention, which is an original diſeaſe in ſome minds; they would be in little danger of offending with their tongue; and would in a moral and religious ſenſe, have due government over it.

I WILL conclude with ſome precepts and reflections of the ſon of Sirach upon this ſubject. *Be ſwift to hear: and if thou haſt underſtanding, anſwer thy neighbour; if not, lay thy hand upon thy mouth. Honour and ſhame is in talk. A man of an ill tongue is dangerous in his city, and he that is raſh in his talk ſhall be hated. A wiſe man will hold his tongue, till he ſee opportunity; but a babler and a fool will regard no time. He that uſeth many words ſhall be abhorred; and he that taketh to himſelf authority therein, ſhall be hated. A backbiting tongue hath diſquieted many; ſtrong cities*

hath it pulled down, and overthrown the houſes of great men. The tongue of a man is his fall; but if thou love to hear, thou ſhalt receive underſtanding.

SERMON V.

Upon COMPASSION.

ROMANS xii. 15.

Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep.

EVERY man is to be conſidered in two capacities, the private and public; as deſigned to purſue his own intereſt, and likewiſe to contribute to the good of others. Whoever will conſider, may ſee, that in general there is no contrariety between theſe; but that from the original conſtitution of man, and the circumſtances he is placed in, they perfectly coincide, and mutually carry on each other. But, amongſt the great variety of affections or principles of actions in our nature, ſome in

their primary intention and deſign ſeem to belong to the ſingle or private, others to the public or ſocial capacity. The affections required in the text are of the latter ſort. When we rejoice in the proſperity of others, and compaſſionate their diſtreſſes, we, as it were, ſubſtitute them for ourſelves, their intereſt for our own; and have the ſame kind of pleaſure in their proſperity and ſorrow in their diſtreſs, as we have from reflection upon our own. Now there is nothing ſtrange or unaccountable in our being thus carried out, and affected towards the intereſts of others. For, if there be any appetite, or any inward principle beſides ſelf-love; why may there not be an affection to the good of our fellow-creatures, and delight from that affection's being gratified, and uneaſineſs from things going contrary to it?*

* There being manifeſtly this appearance of men's ſubſtituting others for themſelves, and being carried out and affected towards them as towards themſelves; ſome perſons, who have a ſyſtem which excludes every affection of this ſort, have taken a pleaſant method to ſolve it; and tell you it is not another you are at all concerned about, but your ſelf only, when you feel

Of theſe two, delight in the proſperity of others, and compaſſion for their diſtreſſes, the

the affection called compaſſion; that is, here is a plain matter of fact, which men cannot reconcile with the general account they think fit to give of things: they therefore, inſtead of that manifeſt fact, ſubſtitute another, which is reconcileable to their own ſcheme. For does not every body by compaſſion mean, an affection the object of which is another in diſtreſs? Inſtead of this, but deſigning to have it miſtaken for this, they ſpeak of an affection or paſſion, the object of which is ourſelves, or danger to ourſelves. Hobbs defines pity, "imagination, or fiction of future calamity to ourſelves, proceeding from the ſenſe" (he means ſight or knowlege) "of another man's calamity." Thus fear and compaſſion would be the ſame idea, and a fearful and a compaſſionate man the ſame character, which every one immediately ſees are totally different. Further, to thoſe who give any ſcope to their affections, there is no perception or inward feeling more univerſal than this: that one, who has been merciful and compaſſionate throughout the courſe of his behaviour, ſhould himſelf be treated with kindneſs, if he happens to fall into circumſtances of diſtreſs. Is fear then or cowardice ſo great a recommendation to the favour of the bulk of mankind? Or is it not plain, that mere fearleſſneſs (and therefor not the contrary) is one of the moſt popular qualifications? This ſhews that mankind

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laſt is felt much more generally than the former. Though men do not univerſally rejoice

are not affected towards compaſſion as fear, but as ſomewhat totally different.

Nothing would more expoſe ſuch accounts, as theſe, of the affections which are favourable and friendly to our fellow-creatures, than to ſubſtitute the definitions which this author, and others who follow his ſteps, give of ſuch affections, inſtead of the words by which they are commonly expreſſed. Hobbs, after having laid down that pity or compaſſion is only fear for ourſelves, goes on to explain the reaſon why we pity our friends in diſtreſs more than others. Now ſubſtitute the *definition* inſtead of the word *pity* in this place, and the inquiry will be, why we fear our friends, etc. which words (ſince he really does not mean why we are afraid of them) make no queſtion or ſentence at all. So that in common language, the words *to compaſſionate, to pity*, cannot be accommodated to his account of compaſſion. The very joining of the words to *pity our friends*, is a direct contradiction to his definition of pity: becauſe thoſe words ſo joined, neceſſarily expreſs that our friends are the objects of the paſſion; whereas his definition of it aſſerts, that ourſelves, (or danger to ourſelves) are the only objects of it. He might indeed have avoided this abſurdity, by plainly ſaying what he is going to account for; namely, why the ſight of the innocent, or of our friends in diſtreſs, raiſes greater

with all whom they ſee rejoice, yet, accidental obſtacles removed, they naturally compaſſionate

fear for ourſelves than the ſight of other perſons in diſtreſs. But had he put the thing thus plainly, the fact itſelf would have been doubted; that *the ſight of our friends in diſtreſs raiſes in us greater fear for ourſelves, than the ſight of others in diſtreſs.* And in the next place it would immediately have occurred to every one, that the fact now mentioned, which at leaſt is doubtful, whether true or falſe, was not the ſame with this fact, which, nobody ever doubted, that *the ſight of our friends in diſtreſs raiſes in us greater compaſſion than the ſight of others in diſtreſs:* every one, I ſay, would have ſeen that theſe are not the ſame, but two different inquiries; and conſequently, that fear and compaſſion are not the ſame. Suppoſe a perſon to be in real danger, and by ſome means or other to have forgot it; any trifling accident, any ſound might alarm him, recall the danger to his rememberance, and renew his fear: but it is almoſt too groſsly ridiculous (though it is to ſhow an abſurdity) to ſpeak of that ſound or accident as an object of compaſſion; and yet, according to Mr. Hobbs, our greateſt friend in diſtreſs is no more to us, no more the object of compaſſion or of any affection in our heart: neither the one or the other raiſes any emotion in our mind, but only the thoughts of our liableneſs to calamity, and the fear of it; and both equally do this. It is fit ſuch ſort of accounts of human na-

all in ſome degree whom they ſee in diſtreſs, ſo far as they have any real perception or ſenſe

ture ſhould be ſhown to be what they really are, becauſe there is raiſed upon them a general ſcheme which undermines the whole foundation of common juſtice and honeſty. See Hobbs of Hum. Nat. c. 9. §. 10.

There are often three diſtinct perceptions or inward feelings upon ſight of perſons in diſtreſs: real ſorrow and concern for the miſery of our fellow-creatures; ſome degree of ſatisfaction from a conſciouſneſs of our freedom from that miſery; and as the mind paſſes on from one thing to another, it is not unnatural from ſuch an occaſion to reflect upon our own liableneſs to the ſame or other calamities. The two laſt frequently accompany the firſt, but it is the firſt only which is properly compaſſion, of which the diſtreſſed are the objects, and which directly carries us with calmneſs and thought to their aſſiſtance. Any one of theſe, from various and complicated reaſons, may in particular places prevail over the other two; and there are, I ſuppoſe, inſtances where the bare ſight of diſtreſs, without our feeling any compaſſion for it, may be the occaſion of either or both of the two latter perceptions. One might add, that if there be really any ſuch thing as the fiction or imagination of danger to ourſelves from ſight of the miſeries of others, which Hobbs ſpeaks of, and which he has abſurdly miſtaken for the whole of compaſſion; if there be any thing of this ſort com-

of that diſtreſs: inſomuch that words expreſſing this latter, pity, compaſſion, frequently occur; whereas we have ſcarce any ſingle one, by which the former is diſtinctly expreſſed. Congratulation indeed anſwers condolance: but both theſe words are intended to ſignify certain forms of civility, rather than any inward ſenſation or feeling. This difference or inequality is ſo remarkable, that we plainly conſider compaſſion as itſelf an original, diſtinct, particular affection in human nature: whereas to rejoice in the good of others, is only a conſequence of the general affection of love and

mon to mankind, diſtinct from the reflection of reaſon, it would be a moſt remarkable inſtance of what was furtheſt from his thoughts, namely, of a mutual ſympathy between each particular of the ſpecies, a fellow-feeling common to mankind. It would not indeed be an example of our ſubſtituting others for ourſelves, but it would be an example of our ſubſtituting ourſelves for others. And as it would not be an inſtance of benevolence, ſo neither would it be any inſtance of ſelf-love; for this phantom of danger to ourſelves, naturally riſing to view upon ſight of the diſtreſſes of others, would be no more an inſtance of love to ourſelves, than the pain of hunger is.

good-will to them. The reaſon and account of which matter is this. When a man has obtained any particular advantage or felicity, his end is gained; and he does not in that particular want the aſſiſtance of another: there was therefore no need of a diſtinct affection towards that felicity of another already obtained; neither would ſuch affection directly carry him to do good to that perſon: whereas men in diſtreſs want aſſiſtance; and compaſſion leads us directly to aſſiſt them. The object of the former is the preſent felicity of another; the object of the latter is the preſent miſery of another: it is eaſy to ſee that the latter wants a particular affection for its relief, and that the former does not want one, becauſe it does not want aſſiſtance. And upon ſuppoſition of a diſtinct affection in both caſes, the one muſt reſt in the exerciſe of itſelf, having nothing further to gain; the other does not reſt in itſelf, but carries us on to aſſiſt the diſtreſſed.

But, ſuppoſing theſe affections natural to the mind, particularly the laſt; "Has not "each man troubles enough of his own? muſt "he indulge an affection which appropriates to

" himſelf thoſe of others? which leads him to
" contract the leaſt deſirable of all friendſhips,
" friendſhips with the unfortunate? Muſt we
" invert the known rule of prudence, and
" chuſe to aſſociate ourſelves with the diſtreſ-
" ſed? Or allowing that we ought, ſo far as
" it is in our power, to relieve them; yet is
" it not better to do this from reaſon and du-
" ty? Does not paſſion and affection of every
" kind perpetually miſlead us? Nay, is not
" paſſion and affection itſelf a weakneſs, and
" what a perfect being muſt be entirely free
" from?" Perhaps ſo: but it is mankind I am ſpeaking of; imperfect creatures, and who naturally, and, from the condition we are placed in, neceſſarily depend upon each other. With reſpect to ſuch creatures, it would be found of as bad conſequence to eradicate all natural affections, as to be entirely governed by them. This would almoſt ſink us to the condition of brutes; and that would leave us without a ſufficient principle of action. Reaſon alone, whatever any one may wiſh, is not in reality a ſufficient motive of virtue in ſuch a creature as man; but this reaſon joined with

thoſe affections which God has impreſſed upon his heart: and when theſe are allowed ſcope to exerciſe themſelves, but under ſtrict government and direction of reaſon; then it is we act ſuitable to our nature, and to the circumſtances God has placed us in. Neither is affection itſelf at all a weakneſs; nor does it argue defect, any otherwiſe than as our ſenſes and appetites do; they belong to our condition of nature, and are what we cannot be without. God Almighty is to be ſure unmoved by paſſion or appetite, unchanged by affection: but then it is to be added, that he neither ſees, nor hears, nor perceives things by any ſenſes like ours; but in a manner infinitely more perfect. Now, as it is an abſurdity almoſt too groſs to be mentioned, for a man to endeavour to get rid of his ſenſes, becauſe the ſupreme Being diſcerns things more perfectly without them; it is as real, though not ſo obvious an abſurdity, to endeavour to eradicate the paſſions he has given us, becauſe he is without them. For, ſince our paſſions are as really a part of our conſtitution as our ſenſes; ſince the former as really belong to our condition of

nature as the latter; to get rid of either, is equally a violation of and breaking in upon that nature and conſtitution he has given us. Both our ſenſes and our paſſions are a ſupply to the imperfection of our nature: thus they ſhew that we are ſuch ſort of creatures, as to ſtand in need of thoſe helps which higher orders of creatures do not. But it is not the ſupply, but the deficiency; as it is not a remedy, but a diſeaſe which is the imperfection. However, our appetites, paſſions, ſenſes, no way imply diſeaſe; nor indeed do they imply deficiency or imperfection of any ſort; but only this, that the conſtitution of nature, according to which God has made us, is ſuch as to require them. And it is ſo far from being true, that a wiſe man muſt entirely ſuppreſs compaſſion, and all fellow-feeling for others, as a weakneſs; and truſt to reaſon alone, to teach and enforce upon him the practice of the ſeveral charities we owe to our kind; that, on the contrary, even the bare exerciſe of ſuch affections would itſelf be for the good and happineſs of the world; and the imperfection of the higher principles of reaſon and religion in man, the little influence they have

upon our practice, and the ſtrength and prevalency of contrary ones plainly require theſe affections to be a reſtraint upon theſe latter, and a ſupply to the deficiences of the former.

Firſt, The very exerciſe itſelf of theſe affections in a juſt and reaſonable manner and degree, would upon the whole encreaſe the ſatisfactions, and leſſen the miſeries of life.

It is the tendency and buſineſs of virtue and religion to procure, as much as may be, univerſal good-will, truſt and friendſhip amongſt mankind. If this could be brought to obtain; and each man enjoyed the happineſs of others, as every one does that of a friend: and looked upon the ſucceſs and proſperity of his neighbour, as every one does upon that of his children and family; it is too manifeſt to be inſiſted upon, how much the enjoyments of life would be encreaſed. There would be ſo much happineſs introduced into the world, without any deduction or inconvenience from it, in proportion as the precept of *rejoicing with thoſe that rejoice* was univerſally obeyed. Our Saviour has owned this good affection as belonging to our nature, in the parable of the *loſt ſheep;*

and does not think it to the diſadvantage of a perfect ſtate, to repreſent its happineſs as capable of encreaſe from reflection upon that of others.

But ſince in ſuch a creature as man, compaſſion or ſorrow for the diſtreſs of others, ſeems ſo far neceſſarily connected with joy in their proſperity, as that whoever rejoices in one muſt unavoidably compaſſionate the other; there cannot be that delight or ſatisfaction, which appears to be ſo conſiderable, without the inconveniencies, whatever they are, of compaſſion.

However, without conſidering this connection, there is no doubt but that more good than evil, more delight than ſorrow, ariſes from compaſſion itſelf; there being ſo many things which balance the ſorrow of it. There is firſt the relief which the diſtreſſed feel from this affection in others towards them. There is likewiſe the additional miſery which they would feel from the reflection that no one commiſerated their caſe. It is indeed true, that any diſpoſition, prevailing beyond a certain degree, becomes ſomewhat wrong; and

we have ways of ſpeaking, which though they do not directly expreſs that exceſs, yet, always lead our thoughts to it, and give us the notion of it. Thus, when mention is made of delight in being pitied, this always conveys to our mind the notion of ſomewhat which is really a weakneſs: the manner of ſpeaking, I ſay, implies a certain weakneſs and feebleneſs of mind, which is and ought to be diſapproved. But men of the greateſt fortitude would in diſtreſs feel uneaſineſs, from knowing that no perſon in the world had any ſort of compaſſion or real concern for them; and in ſome caſes, eſpecially when the temper is enfeebled by ſickneſs or any long and great diſtreſs, doubtleſs, would feel a kind of relief even from the helpleſs good-will and ineffectual aſſiſtances of thoſe about them. Over againſt the ſorrow of compaſſion is likewiſe to be ſet a peculiar calm kind of ſatisfaction, which accompanies it, unleſs in caſes where the diſtreſs of another is by ſome means ſo brought home to ourſelves, as to become in a manner our own; or when from weakneſs of mind the affection riſes too high, which ought to be corrected. This

tranquillity or calm ſatisfaction proceeds, partly from conſcioufneſs of a right affection and temper of mind, and partly from a ſenſe of our own freedom from the miſery we compaſſionate. This laſt may poſſibly appear to ſome at firſt ſight faulty; but it really is not ſo. It is the ſame with that poſitive enjoyment, which ſudden eaſe from pain for the preſent affords, ariſing from a real ſenſe of miſery, joined with a ſenſe of our freedom from it; which in all caſes muſt afford ſome degree of ſatisfaction.

To theſe things muſt be added the obſervation, which reſpects both the affections we are conſidering; that they who have got over all fellow-feeling for others, have withal contracted a certain calloufneſs of heart, which renders them inſenſible to moſt other ſatisfactions, but thoſe of the groſſeſt kind.

Secondly, WITHOUT the exerciſe of theſe affections, men would certainly be much more wanting in the offices of charity they owe to each other, and likewiſe more cruel and injurious, than they are at preſent.

THE private intereſt of the individual would

not be ſufficiently provoided for by reaſonable and cool ſelf-love alone: therefor the appetites and paſſions are placed within as a guard and further ſecurity, without which it would not be taken due care of. It is manifeſt our life would be neglected, were it not for the calls of hunger, and thirſt, and wearineſs; notwithſtanding that without them reaſon would aſſure us, that the recruits of food and ſleep are a neceſſary means of our preſervation. It is therefor abſurd to imagine, that, without affection, the ſame reaſon alone would be more effectual to engage us to perform the duties we owe to our fellow-creatures. One of this make would be as defective, as much wanting, conſidered with reſpect to ſociety; as one of the former make would be defective, or wanting, conſidered as an individual, or in his private capacity. Is it poſſible any one can in earneſt think, that a public ſpirit, that is, a ſettled reaſonable principle of benevolence to mankind, is ſo prevalent and ſtrong in the ſpecies, as that we may venture to throw off the under affections, which are its aſſiſtants, carry it forward and mark out particular courſes

for it; family, friends, neighbourhood, the diſtreſſed, our country? The common joys and the common ſorrows, which belong to theſe relations and circumſtances, are as plainly uſeful to ſociety; as the pain and pleaſure belonging to hunger, thirſt, and wearineſs are of ſervice to the individual. In defect of that higher principle of reaſon, compaſſion is often the only way by which the indigent can have acceſs to us: and therefor to eradicate this, though it is not indeed formally to deny them that aſſiſtance which is their due; yet it is to cut them off from that which is too frequently their only way of obtaining it. And as for thoſe who have ſhut up this door againſt the complaints of the miſerable, and conquered this affection in themſelves; even theſe perſons will be under great reſtraints from the ſame affection in others. Thus a man, who has himſelf no ſenſe of injuſtice, cruelty, oppreſſion, will be kept from running the utmoſt lengths of wickedneſs, by fear of that deteſtation, and even reſentment of inhumanity, in many particular inſtances of it, which compaſſion for the object, towards whom ſuch inhumanity is

exerciſed, excites in the bulk of mankind. And this is frequently the chief danger, and the chief reſtraint, which tyrants and the great oppreſſors of the world feel.

In general, experience will ſhew, that as want of natural appetite to food ſuppoſes and proceeds from ſome bodily diſeaſe; ſo the apathy the Stoics talk of as much ſuppoſes or is accompanied with ſomewhat amiſs in the moral character, in that which is the health of the mind. Thoſe, who formerly aimed at this upon the foot of philoſophy, appear to have had better ſucceſs in eradicating the affections of tenderneſs and compaſſion, than they had with the paſſions of envy, pride and reſentment: theſe latter, at beſt, were but concealed, and that imperfectly too. How far this obſervation may be extended to ſuch as endeavour to ſuppreſs the natural impulſes of their affections, in order to form themſelves for buſineſs and the world, I ſhall not determine. But there does not appear any capacity or relation to be named, in which men ought to be entirely deaf to the calls of affection, unleſs the judicial one is to be excepted.

And as to thoſe who are commonly called the men of pleaſure, it is manifeſt that the reaſon they ſet up for hardneſs of heart, is to avoid being interrupted in their courſe, by the ruin and miſery they are the authors of: neither are perſons of this character always the moſt free from the impotencies of envy and reſentment. What may men at laſt bring themſelves to, by ſuppreſſing their paſſions and affections of one kind, and leaving thoſe of the other in their full ſtrength? But ſurely it might be expected that perſons who make pleaſure their ſtudy and their buſineſs, if they underſtood what they profeſs, would reflect, how many of the entertainments of life, how many of thoſe kind of amuſements which ſeem peculiarly to belong to men of leiſure and education, they become inſenſible to by this acquired hardneſs of heart.

I shall cloſe theſe reflections with barely mentioning the behaviour of that divine perſon, who was the example of all perfection in human nature, as repreſented in the goſpels mourning, and even, in a literal ſenſe, weeping over the diſtreſſes of his creatures.

THE obſervation already made, that, of the two affections mentioned in the text, the latter exerts itſelf much more than the former; that, from the original conſtitution of human nature we much more generally and ſenſibly compaſſionate the diſtreſſed, than rejoice with the proſperous, requires to be particularly conſidered. This obſervation therefor, with the reflections which ariſe out of it, and which it leads our thoughts to, ſhall be the ſubject of another diſcourſe.

FOR the concluſion of this, let me juſt take notice of the danger of over-great refinements; of going beſides or beyond the plain, obvious, firſt appearances of things, upon the ſubject of morals and religion. The leaſt obſervation will ſhow, how little the generality of men are capable of ſpeculations. Therefor morality and religion muſt be ſomewhat plain and eaſy to be underſtood: it muſt appeal to what we call plain common ſenſe, as diſtinguiſhed from ſuperior capacity and improvement; becauſe it appeals to mankind. Perſons of ſuperior capacity and improvement have often fallen into errors, which no one of mere com-

mon underſtanding could. Is it poſſible that one of this latter character could ever of himſelf have thought, that there was abſolutely no ſuch thing in mankind as affection to the good of others; ſuppoſe of parents to their children; or that what he felt upon ſeeing a friend in diſtreſs, was only fear for himſelf; or, upon ſuppoſition of the affections of kindneſs and compaſſion, that it was the buſineſs of wiſdom and virtue, to ſet him about extirpating them as faſt as he could? And yet each of theſe manifeſt contradictions to nature has been laid down by men of ſpeculation, as a diſcovery in moral philoſophy; which they, it ſeems, have found out through all the ſpecious appearances to the contrary. This reflection may be extended further. The extravagancies of enthuſiaſm and ſuperſtition do not at all lie in the road of common ſenſe; and therefor ſo far as they are original miſtakes, muſt be owing to going beſide or beyond it. Now, ſince enquiry and examination can relate only to things ſo obſcure and uncertain as to ſtand in need of it, and to perſons who are capable of it; the proper advice to be given to

plain honeſt men, to ſecure them from the extremes both of ſuperſtition and irreligion, is that of the ſon of Sirach: *In every good work truſt thy own ſoul; for this is the keeping of the commandment* *.

* Ecclus. xxxii. 23.

SERMON VI.

Upon COMPASSION.

Preached the firſt Sunday in Lent.

ROMANS xii. 15.

Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep.

THERE is a much more exact correſpondence between the natural and moral world, than we are apt to take notice of. The inward frame of man does in a peculiar manner anſwer to the external condition and circumſtances of life, in which he is placed. This is a particular inſtance of that general obſervation of the ſon of Sirach: * *All things are*

* Ecclus. xiii. 14.

double one againſt another, and God hath made nothing imperfect. The ſeveral paſſions and affections in the heart of man, compared with the circumſtances of life in which he is placed, afford to ſuch as will attend to them, as certain inſtances of final cauſes, as any whatever which are more commonly alleged for ſuch: ſince thoſe affections lead him to a certain determinate courſe of action ſuitable to thoſe circumſtances; as for inſtance, compaſſion, to relieve the diſtreſſed. And as all obſervations of final cauſes, drawn from the principles of action in the heart of man, compared with the condition he is placed in, ſerve all the good uſes which inſtances of final cauſes in the material world about us do; and both theſe are equally proofs of wiſdom and deſign in the author of nature: ſo the former ſerve to further good purpoſes; they ſhew us what courſe of life we are made for, what is our duty, and in a peculiar manner enforce upon us the practice of it.

SUPPOSE we are capable of happineſs and of miſery in degrees equally intenſe and extreme, yet we are capable of the latter for a

much longer time beyond all compariſon. We ſee men in the tortures of pain for hours, days, and, excepting the ſhort ſuſpenſions of ſleep, for months together without intermiſſion; to which no enjoyments of life do, in degree and continuance, bear any ſort of proportion. And ſuch is our make and that of the world about us, that any thing may become the inſtrument of pain and ſorrow to us. Thus almoſt any one man is capable of doing miſchief to any other, though he may not be capable of doing him good. And if he be capable of doing him ſome good, he is capable of doing him more evil. And it is in numberleſs caſes, much more in our power to leſſen the miſeries of others, than to promote their poſitive happineſs, any otherwiſe than as the former often includes the latter; eaſe from miſery occaſioning for ſome time the greateſt poſitive enjoyment. This conſtitution of nature, namely, that it is ſo much more in our power to occaſion and likewiſe to leſſen miſery, than to promote poſitive happineſs, plainly required a particular affection, to hinder us from abuſing, and to encline us to make a right uſe of the

former powers, that is, the powers both to occaſion and to leſſen miſery; over and above what was neceſſary to induce us to make a right uſe of the latter power, that of promoting poſitive happineſs. The power we have over the miſery of our fellow-creatures, to occaſion or leſſen it, being a more important truſt, than the power we have of promoting their poſitive happineſs; the former requires and has a further, an additional ſecurity and guard againſt its being violated, beyond and over and above what the latter has. The ſocial nature of man, and general good-will to his ſpecies, equally prevent him from doing evil, incline him to relieve the diſtreſſed, and to promote the poſitive happineſs of his fellow-creatures: but compaſſion only reſtrains from the firſt, and carries him to the ſecond; it hath nothing to do with the third.

THE final cauſes then of compaſſion are to prevent and to relieve miſery.

AS to the former: this affection may plainly be a reſtraint upon reſentment, envy, unreaſonable ſelf-love; that is, upon all the principles from which men do evil to one another,

Let us inſtance only in reſentment. It ſeldom happens, in regulated ſocieties, that men have an enemy ſo entirely in their power, as to be able to ſatiate their reſentment with ſafety. But if we were to put this caſe, it is plainly ſuppoſeable, that a perſon might bring his enemy into ſuch a condition, as from being the object of anger and rage, to become an object of compaſſion, even to himſelf, though the moſt malicious man in the world: and in this caſe compaſſion would ſtop him, if he could ſtop with ſafety, from purſuing his revenge any further. But ſince nature has placed within us more powerful reſtraints to prevent miſchief, and ſince the final cauſe of compaſſion is much more to relieve miſery, let us go on to the conſideration of it in this view.

As this world was not intended to be a ſtate of any great ſatisfaction or high enjoyment; ſo neither was it intended to be a mere ſcene of unhappineſs and ſorrow. Mitigations and reliefs are provided by the merciful author of nature, for moſt of the afflictions in human life. There is kind proviſion made even againſt our frailties; as we are ſo conſtituted

that time abundantly abates our ſorrows, and begets in us that reſignation of temper, which ought to have been produced by a better cauſe; a due ſenſe of the authority of God, and our ſtate of dependance. This holds in reſpect to far the greateſt part of the evils of life; I ſuppoſe, in ſome degree, as to pain and ſickneſs. Now this part of the conſtitution or make of man, conſidered as ſome relief to miſery, and not as proviſion for poſitive happineſs, is, if I may ſo ſpeak, an inſtance of nature's compaſſion for us; and every natural remedy or relief to miſery may be conſidered in the ſame view.

But ſince, in many caſes, it is very much in our power to alleviate the miſeries of each other; and benevolence, though natural in man to man, yet is in a very low degree, kept down by intereſt and competitions; and men, for the moſt part, are ſo engaged in the buſineſs and pleaſures of the world, as to overlook and turn away from objects of miſery; which are plainly conſidered as interuptions to them in their way, as intruders upon their buſineſs, their gaiety and mirth: compaſſion is an ad-

vocate within us in their behalf, to gain the unhappy admittance and acceſs, to make their caſe attended to. If it ſometimes ſerves a contrary purpoſe, and makes men induſtriouſly turn away from the miſerable, theſe are only inſtances of abuſe and perverſion: for the end, for which the affection was given us, moſt certainly is not to make us avoid, but to make us attend to the objects of it. And if men would only reſolve to allow thus much to it; let it bring before their view, the view of their mind, the miſeries of their fellow-creatures; let it gain for them that their caſe be conſidered; I am perſuaded it would not fail of gaining more, and that very few objects of charity would paſs unrelieved. Pain and ſorrow and miſery have a right to our aſſiſtance: compaſſion puts us in mind of the debt, and that we owe it to ourſelves, as well as to the diſtreſſed. For, to endeavour to get rid of the ſorrow of compaſſion by turning from the wretched, when yet it is in our power to relieve them, is as unnatural, as to endeavour to get rid of the pain of hunger by keeping from the ſight of food. That we can do one with greater ſucceſs than we can

the other, is no proof that one is leſs a violation of nature than the other. Compaſſion is a call, a demand of nature, to relieve the unhappy; as hunger is a natural call for food. This affection plainly gives the objects of it an additional claim to relief and mercy, over and above what our fellow-creatures in common have to our good-will. Liberality and bounty are exceedingly commendable; and a particular diſtinction in ſuch a world as this, where men ſet themſelves to contract their heart, and cloſe it to all intereſts but their own. It is by no means to be oppoſed to mercy, but always accompanies it: the diſtinction between them is only, that the former leads our thoughts to a more promiſcuous and undiſtinguiſhed diſtribution of favours; to thoſe who are not, as well as thoſe who are neceſſitous; whereas the object of compaſſion is miſery. But in the compariſon, and where there is not a poſſibility of both, mercy is to have the preference: the affection of compaſſion manifeſtly leads us to this preference. Thus, to relieve the indigent and diſtreſſed, to ſingle out the unhappy, from whom can be expected no returns either of pre-

ſent entertainment or future ſervice, for the objects of our favours, to eſteem a man's being friendleſs as a recommendation; dejection and incapacity of ſtruggling through the world, as a motive for aſſiſting him; in a word, to conſider theſe circumſtances of diſadvantage, which are uſually thought a ſufficient reaſon for neglect and overlooking a perſon, as a motive for helping him forward: this is the courſe of benevolence which compaſſion marks out and directs us to: this is that humanity, which is ſo peculiarly becoming our nature and circumſtances in this world.

To theſe conſiderations, drawn from the nature of man, muſt be added the reaſon of the thing itſelf we are recommending, which accords to and ſhews the ſame. For, ſince it is ſo much more in our power to leſſen the miſeries of our fellow-creatures, than to promote their poſitive happineſs; in caſes where there is an inconſiſtency, we ſhall be likely to do much more good by ſetting ourſelves to mitigate the former, than by endeavouring to promote the latter. Let the competition be

between the poor and the rich. It is eaſy, you will ſay, to ſee which will have the preference. True: but the queſtion is, which ought to have the preference? What proportion is there, between the happineſs produced by doing a favour to the indigent, and that produced by doing the ſame favour to one in eaſy circumſtances? It is manifeſt, that the addition of a very large eſtate to one who before had an affluence, will in many inſtances yield him leſs new enjoyment or ſatisfaction, than an ordinary charity would yield to a neceſſitous perſon. So that it is not only true, that our nature, that is, the voice of God within us, carries us to the exerciſe of charity and benevolence in the way of compaſſion or mercy, preferable to any other way; but we alſo manifeſtly diſcern much more good done by the former; or, if you will allow me the expreſſions, more miſery annihilated, and happineſs created. If charity and benevolence, and endeavouring to do good to our fellow-creatures, be any thing, this obſervation deſerves to be moſt ſeriouſly conſidered by all who have to beſtow. And it holds with great ex-

actneſs, when applied to the ſeveral degrees of greater and leſs indigency throughout the various ranks in human life: the happineſs or good produced not being in proportion to what is beſtowed, but in proportion to this joined with the need there was of it.

It may perhaps be expected, that, upon this ſubject, notice ſhould be taken of occaſions, circumſtances and characters, which ſeem at once to call forth affections of different ſorts. Thus vice may be thought the object both of pity and indignation: folly, of pity and of laughter. How far this is ſtrictly true, I ſhall not enquire; but only obſerve upon the appearance, how much more humane it is to yield and give ſcope to affections, which are more directly in favour of, and friendly towards our fellow-creatures; and that there is plainly much leſs danger of being led wrong by theſe, than by the other.

But notwithſtanding all that has been ſaid in recommendation of compaſſion, that it is moſt amiable, moſt becoming human nature, and moſt uſeful to the world; yet it muſt be owned, that every affection, as diſtinct from a

principle of reaſon, may riſe too high, and be beyond its juſt proportion. And by means of this one carried too far, a man throughout his life is ſubject to much more uneaſineſs than belongs to his ſhare: and in particular inſtances, it may be in ſuch a degree as to incapacitate him from aſſiſting the very perſon who is the object of it. But, as there are ſome who upon principle ſet up for ſuppreſſing this affection itſelf as weakneſs, there is alſo I know not what of faſhion on this ſide; and, by ſome means or other, the whole world almoſt is run into the extremes of inſenſibility towards the diſtreſſes of their fellow-creatures: ſo that general rules and exhortations muſt always be on the other ſide.

And now to go on to the uſes we ſhould make of the foregoing reflections, the further ones they lead to, and the general temper they have a tendency to beget in us. There being that diſtinct affection implanted in the nature of man, tending to leſſen the miſeries of life, that particular proviſion made for abating its ſorrows, more than for encreaſing its poſitive happineſs, as before explained; this may ſug-

geſt to us, what ſhould be our general aim reſpecting ourſelves, in our paſſage through this world: namely, to endeavour chiefly to eſcape miſery, keep free from uneaſineſs, pain and ſorrow, or to get relief and mitigation of them; to propoſe to ourſelves peace and tranquillity of mind, rather than purſue after high enjoyments. This is what the conſtitution of nature before explained marks out as the courſe we ſhould follow, and the end we ſhould aim at. To make pleaſure and mirth and jollity our buſineſs, and be conſtantly hurrying about after ſome gay amuſement, ſome new gratification of ſenſe or appetite, to thoſe who will conſider the nature of man and our condition in this world, will appear the moſt romantic ſcheme of life that ever entered into thought. And yet how many are there who go on in this courſe, without learning better from the daily, the hourly diſappointments, liſtleſſneſs and ſatiety, which accompany this faſhionable method of waſting away their days?

The ſubject we have been inſiſting upon would lead us into the ſame kind of reflections, by a different connection. The miſeries of life

brought home to ourſelves by compaſſion, viewed through this affection conſidered as the ſenſe by which they are perceived, would beget in us that moderation, humility, and ſoberneſs of mind, which has been now recommended; and which peculiarly belongs to a ſeaſon of recollection, the only purpoſe of which is to bring us to a juſt ſenſe of things, to recover us out of that forgetfulneſs of ourſelves, and our true ſtate, which it is manifeſt far the greateſt part of men paſs their whole life in. Upon this account Solomon ſays, that *it is better to go to the houſe of mourning, than to the houſe of feaſting:* that is, It is more to a man's advantage to turn his eyes towards objects of diſtreſs, to recall ſometimes to his remembrance the occaſions of ſorrow, than to paſs all his days in thoughtleſs mirth and gaiety. And he repreſents the wiſe as chuſing to frequent the former of theſe places; to be ſure not for its own ſake, but becauſe *by the ſadneſs of the countenance the heart is made better.* Every one obſerves, how temperate and reaſonable men are when humbled and brought low by afflictions, in compariſon of what they are in high proſperi-

ty. By this voluntary reſort to the houſe of mourning which is here recommended, we might learn all thoſe uſeful inſtructions which calamities teach, without undergoing them ourſelves; and grow wiſer and better at a more eaſy rate than men commonly do. The objects themſelves, which in that place of ſorrow lie before our view, naturally give us a ſerioufneſs and attention, check that wantonneſs which is the growth of proſperity and eaſe, and lead us to reflect upon the deficiencies of human life itſelf; *that every man at his beſt eſtate is altogether vanity.* This would correct the florid and gaudy proſpects and expectations which we are too apt to indulge, teach us to lower our notions of happineſs and enjoyment, bring them down to the reality of things, to what is attainable, to what the frailty of our condition will admit of, which, for any continuance, is only tranquillity, eaſe, and moderate ſatisfactions. Thus we might at once become proof againſt the temptations, with which the whole world almoſt is carried away, ſince it is plain, that not only what is called a life of pleaſure, but alſo vicious purſuits in

general, aim at ſomething beſides and beyond theſe moderate ſatisfactions.

And as to that obſtinacy and wilfulneſs, which renders men ſo inſenſible to the motives of religion; this right ſenſe of ourſelves and of the world about us would bend the ſtubborn mind, ſoften the heart, and make it more apt to receive impreſſion: and this is the proper temper in which to call our ways to remembrance, to review and ſet home upon ourſelves the miſcarriages of our paſt life. In ſuch a compliant ſtate of mind, reaſon and conſcience will have a fair hearing; which is the preparation for, or rather the beginning of that repentance, the outward ſhow of which we all put on at this ſeaſon.

Laſtly, The various miſeries of life which lie before us wherever we turn our eyes, the frailty of this mortal ſtate we are paſſing thro', may put us in mind that the preſent world is not our home; that we are merely ſtrangers and travellers in it, as all our fathers were. It is therefor to be conſidered as a foreign country; in which our poverty and wants, and the inſufficient ſupplies of them were deſigned to

turn our views to that higher and better ſtate we are heirs to: a ſtate where will be no follies to be overlooked, no miſeries to be pitied, no wants to be relieved; where the affection we have been now treating of will happily be loſt, as there will be no objects to exerciſe it upon: for *God ſhall wipe away all tears from their eyes, and there ſhall be no more death, neither ſorrow, nor crying, neither ſhall there be any more pain; for the former things are paſſed away.*

SERMON VII.

Upon the Character of BALAAM.

Preached the ſecond Sunday after Eaſter.

NUMB. xxiii. 10.

Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my laſt end be like his.

THESE words, taken alone, and without reſpect to him who ſpoke them, lead our thoughts immediately to the different ends of good and bad men. For, though the compariſon is not expreſſed, yet it is manifeſtly implied; as is alſo the preference of one of theſe characters to the other in that laſt circumſtance, death. And, ſince dying the death of the righteous or of the wicked, neceſſarily implies

men's being righteous or wicked, that is, having lived righteouſly or wickedly; a compariſon of them in their lives alſo might come into conſideration from ſuch a ſingle view of the words themſelves. But my preſent deſign is, to conſider them with a peculiar reference or reſpect to him who ſpoke them; which reference, if you pleaſe to attend, you will ſee. And if what ſhall be offered to your conſideration, at this time, be thought a diſcourſe upon the whole hiſtory of this man, rather than upon the particular words I have read, this is of no conſequence: it is ſufficient, if it afford reflection of uſe and ſervice to ourſelves.

But, in order to avoid cavils reſpecting this remarkable relation in ſcripture, either that part of it which you have heard in the firſt leſſon for the day, or any other; let me juſt obſerve, that as this is not a place for anſwering them, ſo they no way affect the following diſcourſe; ſince the character there given is plainly a real one in life, and ſuch as there are parallels to.

The occaſion of Balaam's coming out of his own country into the land of Moab, where

he pronounced this ſolemn prayer or wiſh, he himſelf relates in the firſt parable or prophetic ſpeech, of which it is the concluſion. In which is a cuſtom referred to, proper to be taken notice of: that of devoting enemies to deſtruction, before the entrance upon a war with them. This cuſtom appears to have prevailed over a great part of the world; for we find it amongſt the moſt diſtant nations. The Romans had public officers, to whom it belonged as a ſtated part of their office. But there was ſomewhat more particular in the caſe now before us; Balaam being looked upon as an extraordinary perſon, whoſe bleſſing or curſe was thought to be always effectual.

In order to engage the reader's attention to this paſſage, the ſacred hiſtorian has enumerated the preparatory circumſtances, which are theſe. Balaam requires the king of Moab to build him ſeven altars, and to prepare him the ſame number of oxen and of rams. The ſacrifice being over, he retires alone to a ſolitude ſacred to theſe occaſions, there to wait the divine inſpiration or anſwer, for which the foregoing rites were the preparation. *And*

God met Balaam, and put a word in his mouth *; upon receiving which, he returns back to the altars; where was the king, who had all this while attended the ſacrifice, as appointed; he and all the princes of Moab ſtanding, big with expectation of the prophet's reply. † *And he took up his parable and ſaid, Balak the king of Moab hath brought me from Aram, out of the mountains of the Eaſt; ſaying, come, curſe me Jacob, and come, defy Iſrael. How ſhall I curſe, whom God hath not curſed? Or how ſhall I defy, whom the Lord hath not defied? For from the top of the rocks I ſee him, and from the hills I behold him: lo, the people ſhall dwell alone, and ſhall not be reckoned among the nations. Who can count the duſt of Jacob, and the number of the fourth part of Iſrael? Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my laſt end be like his.*

It is neceſſary, as you will ſee in the progreſs of this diſcourſe, particularly to obſerve what he underſtood by *righteous*. And he himſelf is introduced in the book of Micah ‡

* Ver. 4. 5. † Ver. 6. ‡ Micah. vi.

explaining it; if by *righteous* is meant *good*, as to be ſure it is. *O my people, remember now what Balak king of Moab conſulted, and what Balaam the ſon of Beor anſwered him from Shittim unto Gilgal.* From the mention of Shittim it is manifeſt, that it is this very ſtory which is here referred to, though another part of it, the account of which is not now extant; as there are many quotations in ſcripture out of books which are not come down to us. *Remember what Balaam anſwered, that you may know the righteouſneſs of the Lord*, that is, the righteouſneſs which God will accept. Balak demands, *Wherewith ſhall I come before the Lord, and bow myſelf before the high God? Shall I come before him with burnt-offerings, with calves of a year old? Will the Lord be pleaſed with thouſands of rams, or with ten thouſands of rivers of oil? Shall I give my firſtborn for my tranſgreſſion, the fruit of my body for the ſin of my ſoul?* Balaam anſwers him, *He hath ſhewed thee, O man, what is good: and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do juſtly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?* Here is a man expreſly charac-

terized, as distinct from a dishoneſt, and a ſuperſtitious man. No words can more ſtrongly exclude diſhoneſty and falſeneſs of heart, than *doing juſtice*, and *loving mercy*: and both theſe, as well as *walking humbly with God*, are put in oppoſition to thoſe ceremonial methods of recommendation, which Balak hoped might have ſerved the turn. From hence appears what he meant by the *righteous*, whoſe *death* he deſires to die.

WHETHER it was his own character ſhall now be enquired: and in order to determine it, we muſt take a view of his whole behaviour upon this occaſion. When the elders of Moab came to him, though he appears to have been much allured with the rewards offered, yet he had ſuch regard to the authority of God, as to keep the meſſengers in ſuſpence until he had conſulted his will. *And God ſaid to him*, thou ſhalt not go with them, thou ſhalt not curſe the people, for they are bleſſed.* Upon this he diſmiſſes the ambaſſadors, with an abſolute refuſal of accompanying them back to their king.

* Chap. xxii. 12.

Thus far his regards to his duty prevailed, neither does there any thing appear as yet amiſs in his conduct. His anſwer being reported to the king of Moab, a more honourable embaſſy is immediately diſpatched, and greater rewards propoſed. Then the iniquity of his heart began to diſcloſe itſelf. A thorough honeſt man would without heſitation have repeated his former anſwer, that he could not be guilty of ſo infamous a proſtitution of the ſacred character with which he was inveſted, as in the name of a prophet to curſe thoſe whom he knew to be bleſſed. But inſtead of this, which was the only honeſt part in theſe circumſtances that lay before him, he deſires the princes of Moab to tarry that night with him alſo; and for the ſake of the reward deliberates, whether by ſome means or other he might not be able to curſe Iſrael; to do that, which had been before revealed to him to be contrary to the will of God, which yet he reſolves not to do without that permiſſion. Upon which, as when this nation afterwards rejected God from reigning over them, he gave them a king in

his anger; in the ſame way, as appears from other parts of the narration, he gives Balaam the permiſſion he deſired: for this is the moſt natural ſenſe of the words. Arriving in the territories of Moab, and being received with particular diſtinction by the king, and he repeating in perſon the promiſe of the rewards he had before made to him by his ambaſſadors: he ſeeks, the text ſays, by *ſacrifices* and *enchantments*, (what theſe were is not to our purpoſe) to obtain leave of God to curſe the people; keeping ſtill his reſolution, not to do it without that permiſſion: which not being able to obtain, he had ſuch regard to the command of God, as to keep this reſolution to the laſt. The ſuppoſition of his being under a ſupernatural reſtraint is a mere fiction of Philo: he is plainly repreſented to be under no other force or reſtraint, than the fear of God. However, he goes on perſevering in that endeavour, after he had declared, that *God had not beheld iniquity in Jacob, nor perverſeneſs in Iſrael**. that is, they were a people of virtue and piety ſo far as not to have drawn down by their ini-

* Ver. 21.

quity, that curſe which he was ſoliciting leave to pronounce upon them. So that the ſtate of Balaam's mind was this: he wanted to do what he knew to be very wicked, and contrary to the expreſs command of God; he had inward checks and reſtraints, which he could not entirely get over; he therefor caſts about for ways to reconcile this wickedneſs with his duty. How great a paradox ſoever this may appear, as it is indeed a contradiction in terms, it is the very account which the ſcripture gives us of him.

But there is a more ſurprizing piece of iniquity yet behind. Not daring in his religious character as a prophet to aſſiſt the king of Moab, he conſiders whether there might not be found ſome other means of aſſiſting him againſt that very people, whom he himſelf by the fear of God was reſtrained from curſing in words. One would not think it poſſible, that the weakneſs, even of religious ſelf-deceit in its utmoſt exceſs, could have ſo poor a diſtinction, ſo fond an evaſion, to ſerve itſelf of. But ſo it was: and he could think of no other method, than to betray the children of Iſrael to provoke his

wrath, who was their only ſtrength and defence. The temptation which he pitched upon, was that concerning which Solomon afterwards obſerved, that it had *caſt down many wounded; yea, many ſtrong men had been ſlain by it:* and of which he himſelf was a ſad example, when *his wives turned away his heart after other gods.* This ſucceeded: the people ſin againſt God; and thus the prophet's counſel brought on that deſtruction, which he could by no means be prevailed upon to aſſiſt with the religious ceremony of execration, which the king of Moab thought would itſelf have effected it. Their crime and puniſhment are related in Deuteronomy *, and Numbers †. And from the relation repeated in Numbers ‡, it appears, that Balaam was the contriver of the whole matter. It is alſo aſcribed to him in the Revelation ‖, where he is ſaid to have *taught Balak to caſt a ſtumbling-block before the children of Iſrael.*

THIS was the man, this Balaam, I ſay, was the man who deſired to *die the death of*

* Chap. iv. † Chap. xxv. ‡ Chap. xxxi. ‖ Chap. ii.

the righteous, and that his *laſt end might be like his*: and this was the ſtate of his mind, when he pronounced theſe words.

So that the object we have now before us is the moſt aſtoniſhing in the world: a very wicked man, under a deep ſenſe of God and religion, perſiſting ſtill in his wickedneſs, and preferring the wages of unrighteouſneſs, even when he had before him a lively view of death, and that approaching period of his days, which ſhould deprive him of all thoſe advantages for which he was proſtituting himſelf: and likewiſe a proſpect, whether certain or uncertain, of a future ſtate of retribution: all this joined with an explicit ardent wiſh, that when he was to leave this world, he might be in the condition of a righteous man. Good God, what inconſiſtency, what perplexity is here! with what different views of things, with what contradictory principles of action, muſt ſuch a mind be torn and diſtracted! It was not unthinking careleſſneſs, by which he run on headlong in vice and folly, without ever making a ſtand to aſk himſelf what he was doing: No; he acted upon the cool motives of intereſt and

advantage. Neither was he totally hard and callous to impreſſions of religion, what we call abandoned; for he abſolutely denied to curſe Iſrael. When reaſon aſſumes her place, when convinced of his duty, when he owns and feels, and is actually under the influence of the divine authority; whilſt he is carrying on his views to the grave, the end of all temporal greatneſs; under this ſenſe of things, with the better character and more deſirable ſtate preſent——full before him—in his thoughts, in his wiſhes, voluntarily to chuſe the worſe—What frailty is here! Or how otherwiſe can ſuch a character be explained? And yet, ſtrange as it may appear, it is not altogether an uncommon one: nay, with ſome ſmall alterations, and put a little lower, it is applicable to a very conſiderable part of the world. For, if the reaſonable choice be ſeen and acknowleged, and yet men make the unreaſonable one, is not this the ſame contradiction; the very inconſiſtency which appeared ſo unaccountable?

To give ſome little opening to ſuch characters and behaviour, it is to be obſerved in general, that there is no account to be given in

the way of reaſon, of men's ſo ſtrong attachments to the preſent world: our hopes and fears and purſuits are in degrees beyond all proportion to the known value of the things they reſpect. This may be ſaid without taking into conſideration religion and a future ſtate; and when theſe are conſidered, the diſproportion is infinitely heightened. Now when men go againſt their reaſon, and contradict a more important intereſt at a diſtance, for one nearer, though of leſs conſideration; if this be the whole of the caſe, all that can be ſaid is, that ſtrong paſſions, ſome kind of brute force within, prevails over the principle of rationality. However, if this be with a clear, full and diſtinct view of the truth of things, then it is doing the utmoſt violence to themſelves, acting in the moſt palpable contradiction to their very nature. But if there be any ſuch thing in mankind, as putting half-deceits upon themſelves; which there plainly is, either by avoiding reflection, or (if they do reflect) by religious equivocation, ſubterfuges, and palliating matters to themſelves; by theſe means conſcience may be laid aſleep, and they

may go on in a courſe of wickedneſs with leſs diſturbance. All the various turns, doubles and intricacies in a diſhoneſt heart, cannot be unfolded or laid open; but that there is ſomewhat of that kind is manifeſt, be it to be called ſelf-deceit, or by any other name. Balaam had before his eyes the authority of God, abſolutely forbidding him what he, for the ſake of a reward, had the ſtrongeſt inclination to: he was likewiſe in a ſtate of mind ſober enough to conſider death and his laſt end: by theſe conſiderations he was reſtrained, firſt from going to the king of Moab; and after he did go, from curſing Iſrael. But notwithſtanding this, there was great wickedneſs in his heart. He could not forego the rewards of unrighteouſneſs: he therefor firſt ſeeks for indulgencies; and when theſe could not be obtained, he ſins againſt the whole meaning, end and deſign of the prohibition, which no conſideration in the world could prevail with him to go againſt the letter of. And ſurely that impious connſel, he gave to Balak againſt the children of Iſrael, was, conſidered in itſelf, a greater piece of wickedneſs, than if he had curſed them in words.

If it be inquired what his ſituation, his hopes and fears were, in reſpect to this his wiſh: the anſwer muſt be, that conſciouſneſs of the wickedneſs of his heart muſt neceſſarily have deſtroyed all ſettled hopes of dying the death of the righteous: he could have no calm ſatisfaction in this view of his laſt end: yet, on the other hand, it is poſſible that thoſe partial regards to his duty, now mentioned, might keep him from perfect deſpair.

Upon the whole, it is manifeſt that Balaam had the moſt juſt and true notions of God and religion; as appears partly from the original ſtory itſelf, and more plainly from the paſſage in Micah; where he explains religion to conſiſt in real virtue and real piety, expreſsly diſtinguiſhed from ſuperſtition, and in terms which moſt ſtrongly exclude diſhoneſty and falſeneſs of heart. Yet you ſee his behaviour: he ſeeks indulgencies for plain wickedneſs; which not being able to obtain, he gloſſes over that ſame wickedneſs, dreſſes it up in a new form, in order to make it paſs off more eaſily with himſelf. That is, he deliberately contrives to de-

ceive and impoſe upon himſelf, in a matter which he knew to be of the utmoſt importance.

To bring theſe obſervations home to ourſelves. It is too evident that many perſons allow themſelves in very unjuſtifiable courſes, who yet make great pretences to religion; not to deceive the world, none can be ſo weak as to think this will paſs in our age; but from principles, hopes, and fears, reſpecting God and a future ſtate; and go on thus with a ſort of tranquillity and quiet of mind. This cannot be upon a thorough conſideration, and full reſolution, that the pleaſures and advantages they propoſe are to be purſued at all hazards, againſt reaſon, againſt the law of God, and though everlaſting deſtruction is to be the conſequence. This would be doing too great violence upon themſelves. No, they are for making a compoſition with the Almighty. Theſe of his commands they will obey: but as to others——why, they will make all the atonements in their power; the ambitious, the covetous, the diſſolute man, each in a way which ſhall not contradict his reſpective purſuit. Indulgencies before, which was Balaam's firſt

attempt, though he was not ſo ſucceſsful in it as to deceive himſelf, or atonements afterwards, are all the ſame. And here perhaps come in faint hopes that they may, and half-reſolves that they will, one time or other, make a change.

Besides theſe, there are alſo perſons, who, from a more juſt way of conſidering things, ſee the infinite abſurdity of this, of ſubſtituting ſacrifice inſtead of obedience; there are perſons far enough from ſuperſtition, and not without ſome real ſenſe of God and religion upon their minds; who yet are guilty of moſt unjuſtifiable practices, and go on with great coolneſs and command over themſelves. The ſame diſhoneſty and unſoundneſs of heart diſcovers itſelf in theſe another way. In all common ordinary caſes we ſee intuitively at firſt view what is our duty, what is the honeſt part. This is the ground of the obſervation, that the firſt thought is often the beſt. In theſe caſes doubt and deliberation is itſelf diſhoneſty; as it was in Balaam upon the ſecond meſſage. That which is called conſidering what is our duty in a particular caſe, is very often nothing but endea-

vouring to explain it away. Thus thoſe courſes, which, if men would fairly attend to the dictates of their own conſciences, they would ſee to be corruption, exceſs, oppreſſion, uncharitableneſs; theſe are refined upon—— things were ſo and ſo circumſtantiated—— Great difficulties are raiſed about fixing bounds and degrees: and thus every moral obligation whatever may be evaded. Here is ſcope, I ſay, for an unfair mind to explain away every moral obligation to itſelf. Whether men reflect again upon this internal management and artifice, and how explicit they are with themſelves, is another queſtion. There are many operations of the mind, many things paſs within, which we never reflect upon again; which a by-ſtander, from having frequent opportunities of obſerving us and our conduct, may make ſhrewd gueſſes at.

THAT great numbers are in this way of deceiving themſelves is certain. There is ſcarce a man in the world, who has entirely got over all regards, hopes and fears, concerning God and a future ſtate; and theſe apprehenſions in the generality, bad as we are, prevail in con-

ſiderable degrees: yet men will and can be wicked with calmneſs and thought; we ſee they are. There muſt therefor be ſome method of making it ſit a little eaſy upon their minds; which, in the ſuperſtitious, is thoſe indulgencies and atonements before-mentioned, and this ſelf-deceit of another kind in perſons of another character. And both theſe proceed from a certain unfairneſs of mind, a peculiar inward diſhoneſty; the direct contrary to that ſimplicity which our Saviour recommends, under the notion of *becoming little children*, as a neceſſary qualification for our entering into the kingdom of heaven.

But to conclude: how much ſoever men differ in the courſe of life they prefer, and in their ways of palliating and excuſing their vices to themſelves; yet all agree in the one thing, deſiring to *die the death of the righteous*. This is ſurely remarkable. The obſervation may be extended further, and put thus: even without determining what that is which we call guilt or innocence, there is no man but would chuſe, after having had the pleaſure or advantage of a vitious action, to be free of the guilt

of it, to be in the ſtate of an innocent man. This ſhews at leaſt the diſturbance, and implicit diſſatisfaction in vice. If we enquire into the grounds of it, we ſhall find it proceeds partly from an immediate ſenſe of having done evil; and partly from an apprehenſion, that this inward ſenſe ſhall one time or another be ſeconded by an higher judgment, upon which our whole being depends. Now to ſuſpend and drown this ſenſe, and theſe apprehenſions, be it by the hurry of buſineſs or of pleaſure, or by ſuperſtition, or moral equivocations, this is, in a manner one and the ſame, and makes no alteration at all in the nature of our caſe. Things and actions are what they are, and the conſequences of them will be what they will be: why then ſhould we deſire to be deceived? As we are reaſonable creatures, and have any regard to ourſelves, we ought to lay theſe things plainly and honeſtly before our mind, and upon this, act as you pleaſe, as you think moſt fit; make that choice and prefer that courſe of life, which you can juſtify to yourſelves, and which ſits moſt eaſy upon your own mind. It will immediately appear, that vice

cannot be the happineſs, but muſt upon the whole be the miſery, of ſuch a creature as man; a moral, an accountable agent. Superſtitious obſervances, ſelf-deceit though of a more refined ſort, will not in reality at all mend matters with us. And the reſult of the whole can be nothing elſe, but that with ſimplicity and fairneſs we *keep innocency, and take heed unto the thing that is right; for this alone ſhall bring a man peace at the laſt.*

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SERMON VIII.

Upon RESENTMENT.

MATTH. v. 43, 44.

Ye have heard that it hath been ſaid, thou ſhalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy: but I ſay unto you, love your enemies, bleſs them that curſe you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which deſpitefully uſe you and perſecute you.

SINCE perfect goodneſs in the Deity is the principle, from whence the univerſe was brought into being, and by which it is preſerved; and ſince general benevolence is the great law of the whole moral creation: it is a queſtion which immediately occurs, *Why had man implanted in him a principle, which appears the direct contrary to benevolence?* Now

the foot upon which inquiries of this kind ſhould be treated is this: to take human nature as it is, and the circumſtances in which it is placed as they are; and then conſider the correſpondence between that nature and thoſe circumſtances, or what courſe of action and behaviour, reſpecting thoſe circumſtances, any particular affection or paſſion leads us to. This I mention to diſtinguiſh the matter now before us from diſquiſitions of quite another kind; namely, *Why we are not made more perfect creatures, or placed in better circumſtances?* Theſe being queſtions which we have not, that I know of, any thing at all to do with. God Almighty undoubtedly foreſaw the diſorders, both natural and moral, which would happen in this ſtate of things. If upon this we ſet ourſelves to ſearch and examine, why he did not prevent them; we ſhall, I am afraid, be in danger of running into ſomewhat worſe than impertinent curioſity. But upon this to examine, how far the nature which he hath given us hath a reſpect to thoſe circumſtances, ſuch as they are; how far it leads us to act a proper part in them; plainly belongs to us:

and ſuch inquiries are in many ways of excellent uſe. Thus the thing to be conſidered is, not, *Why we were not made of ſuch a nature, and placed in ſuch circumſtances, as to have no need of ſo harſh and turbulent a paſſion as reſentment;* but taking our nature and condition as being what they are, *Why or what end ſuch a paſſion was given us:* and this chiefly in order to ſhew, what are the abuſes of it.

The perſons who laid down for a rule, *Thou ſhalt love thy neighbour and hate thine enemy*, made ſhort work with this matter. They did not, it ſeems, perceive any thing to be diſapproved in hatred, more than in good-will; and, according to their ſyſtem of morals, our enemy was the proper natural object of one of theſe paſſions, as our neighbour was of the other of them. This was all they had to ſay, and all they thought needful to be ſaid, upon the ſubject. But this cannot be ſatisfactory; becauſe hatred, malice, and revenge, are directly contrary to the religion we profeſs, and to the nature and reaſon of the thing itſelf. Therefor, ſince no paſſion God hath endued us with can be in itſelf evil; and yet ſince men fre-

fre uently indulge a paſſion in ſuch ways and degrees that at length it becomes quite another thing from what it was originally in our nature; and thoſe vices of malice and revenge in particular take their occaſion from the natural paſſion of reſentment: it will be needful to trace this up to the original, that we may ſee, *What it is in itſelf, as placed in our nature by its author:* from which it will plainly appear, *for what it was placed there.* And when we know what the paſſion is in itſelf, and the ends of it, we ſhall eaſily ſee, *what are the abuſes in which malice and revenge conſiſt;* and which are ſo ſtrongly forbidden in the text, by the direct contrary being commanded.

RESENTMENT is of two kinds: haſty and ſudden, or ſettled and deliberate. The former is called anger, and often paſſion; which, tho' a general word, is frequently appropriated and confined to the particular feeling, ſudden anger, as diſtinct from deliberate reſentment, malice and revenge. In all theſe words is uſually implied ſomewhat unreaſonable as to the occaſion of the paſſion, or immoderate as to the degree or duration of it. But that the natural

paſſion itſelf is indifferent, St. Paul has aſſerted in that precept, *Be ye angry and ſin not* *: which though it is by no means to be underſtood as an encouragement to indulge ourſelves in anger, the ſenſe being certainly this, *Though ye be angry, ſin not;* yet here is evidently a diſtinction made, between anger and ſin; between the natural paſſion, and ſinful anger.

SUDDEN anger, upon certain occaſions, is meer inſtinct: as merely ſo, as the diſpoſition to cloſe our eyes upon the apprehenſion of ſomewhat falling into them; and no more neceſſarily implies any degree of reaſon. I ſay, neceſſarily: for to be ſure haſty, as well as deliberate, anger may be occaſioned by injury or contempt; in which caſes reaſon ſuggeſts to our thoughts that injury and contempt, which is the occaſion of the paſſion: but I am ſpeaking of the former only ſo far as it is to be diſtinguiſhed from the latter. The only way in which our reaſon and underſtanding can raiſe anger, is by repreſenting to our mind injuſtice or injury of ſome kind or other. Now momen-

* Epheſ. iv. 26.

tary anger is frequently raiſed, not only without any real, but without any apparent reaſon; that is, without any appearance of injury, as diſtinct from hurt or pain. It cannot, I ſuppoſe, be thought that this paſſion, in infants; in the lower ſpecies of animals; and, which is often ſeen, in men towards them; it cannot, I ſay, be imagined that theſe inſtances of this paſſion are the effect of reaſon: no, they are occaſioned by mere ſenſation and feeling. It is oppoſition, ſudden hurt, violence, which naturally excites the paſſion; and the real demerit or fault of him who offers that violence, or is the cauſe of that oppoſition or hurt, does not in many caſes ſo much as come into thought.

THE reaſon and end, for which man was made thus liable to this paſſion, is, that he might be better qualified to prevent, and likewiſe, or perhaps chiefly, to reſiſt and defeat, ſudden force, violence and oppoſition, conſidered merely as ſuch, and without regard to the fault or demerit of him who is the author of them. Yet, ſince violence may be conſidered in this other and further view, as implying fault; and ſince injury, as diſtinct from

harm, may raiſe ſudden anger; ſudden anger may likewiſe accidentally ſerve to prevent, or remedy, ſuch fault and injury. But, conſidered as diſtinct from ſettled anger, it ſtands in our nature for ſelf-defence, and not for the adminiſtration of juſtice. There are plainly caſes, and in the uncultivated parts of the world, and, where regular governments are not formed, they frequently happen, in which there is no time for conſideration, and yet to be paſſive is certain deſtruction; in which, ſudden reſiſtance is the only ſecurity.

But from this, deliberate anger or reſentment is eſſentially diſtinguiſhed, as the latter is not naturally excited by, or intended to prevent mere harm without appearance of wrong or injuſtice. Now, in order to ſee, as exactly as we can, what is the natural object and occaſion of ſuch reſentment; let us reflect upon the manner in which we are touched with reading, ſuppoſe, a feigned ſtory of baſeneſs and villany, properly worked up to move our paſſions. This immediately raiſes indignation, ſomewhat of a deſire that it ſhould be puniſhed. And though the deſigned injury be prevented,

yet that it was deſigned is ſufficient to raiſe this inward feeling. Suppoſe the ſtory true, this inward feeling would be as natural and as juſt: and one may ventnre to affirm, that there is ſcarce a man in the world, but would have it upon ſome occaſions. It ſeems in us plainly connected with a ſenſe of virtue and vice, of moral good and evil. Suppoſe further, we knew both the perſon who did, and who ſuffered the injury: neither would this make any alteration, only that it would probably affect us more. The indignation raiſed by cruelty and injuſtice, and the deſire of having it puniſhed, which perſons unconcerned would feel, is by no means malice. No, it is reſentment againſt vice and wickedneſs: it is one of the common bonds, by which ſociety is held together; a fellow-feeling which each individual has in behalf of the whole ſpecies, as well as of himſelf. And it does not appear that this, generally ſpeaking, is at all too high amongſt mankind. Suppoſe now the injury I have been ſpeaking of, to be done againſt ourſelves; or thoſe whom we conſider as ourſelves. It is plain, the way, in which we ſhould be affec-

ted, would be exactly the ſame in kind: but it would certainly be in a higher degree, and leſs tranſient; becauſe a ſenſe of our own happineſs and miſery is moſt intimately and always preſent to us; and from the very conſtitution of our nature, we cannot but have a greater ſenſibility to, and be more deeply intereſted in, what concerns ourſelves. And this ſeems to be the whole of this paſſion which is, properly ſpeaking, natural to mankind: namely, a reſentment againſt injury, and wickedneſs in general; and in a higher degree when towards ourſelves, in proportion to the greater regard which men naturally have for themſelves, than for others. From hence it appears, that it is not natural, but moral evil; it is not ſuffering, but injury, which raiſes that anger or reſentment, which is of any continuance. The natural object of it is not one, who appears to the ſuffering perſon to have been only the innocent occaſion of his pain or loſs; but one, who has been in a moral ſenſe injurious either to ourſelves or others. This is abundantly confirmed by obſerving, what it is which heightens or leſſens reſentment; namely, the

ſame which aggravates or leſſens the fault: friendſhip and former obligations, on one hand; or inadvertency, ſtrong temptations and miſtake, on the other. All this is ſo much underſtood by mankind, how little ſoever it be reflected upon, that a perſon would be reckoned quite diſtracted, who ſhould coolly reſent an harm, which had not to himſelf the appearance of injury or wrong. Men do indeed reſent what is occaſioned through careleſſneſs: but then they expect obſervance as their due, and ſo that careleſſneſs is conſidered as faulty. It is likewiſe true, that they reſent more ſtrongly an injury done, than one which, though deſigned, was prevented, in caſes where the guilt is perhaps the ſame: the reaſon however is, not that bare pain or loſs raiſes reſentment, but, that it gives a new, and, as I may ſpeak, additional ſenſe of the injury or injuſtice. According to the natural courſe of the paſſions, the degrees of reſentment are in proportion, not only to the degree of deſign and deliberation in the injurious perſon; but in proportion to this, joined with the degree of the evil deſigned or premeditated; ſince this likewiſe

comes in to make the injuſtice greater or leſs. And the evil or harm will appear greater when they feel it, than when they only reflect upon it: ſo therefor will the injury: and conſequently the reſentment will be greater.

The natural object, or occaſion, of ſettled reſentment then being injury, as diſtinct from pain or loſs; it is eaſy to ſee, that to prevent and to remedy ſuch injury, and the miſeries ariſing from it, is the end for which this paſſion was implanted in man. It is to be conſidered as a weapon, put into our hands by nature, againſt injury, injuſtice and cruelty: how it may be innocently employed and made uſe of, ſhall preſently be mentioned.

The account, which has been now given of this paſſion, is in brief, that ſudden anger is raiſed by, and was chiefly intended to prevent or remedy mere harm diſtinct from injury: but that it may be raiſed by injury, and may ſerve to prevent or to remedy it; and then the occaſions and effects of it are the ſame, with the occaſions and effects of deliberate anger. But they are eſſentially diſtinguiſhed in this, that the latter is never occaſioned by harm, diſtinct

from injury; and its natural proper end is to remedy or prevent only that harm, which implies, or is ſuppoſed to imply, injury or moral wrong. Every one ſees that theſe obſervations do not relate to thoſe, who have habitually ſuppreſſed the courſe of their paſſions and affections, out of regard either to intereſt or virtue; or who, from habits of vice and folly, have changed their nature. But I ſuppoſe, there can be no doubt but this, now deſcribed, is the general courſe of reſentment, conſidered as a natural paſſion, neither increaſed by indulgence, nor corrected by virtue, nor prevailed over by other paſſions, or particular habits of life.

As to the abuſes of anger, which it is to be obſerved may be in all different degrees, the firſt which occurs is what is commonly called paſſion; to which ſome men are liable, in the ſame way as others are to the epilepſie, or any ſudden particular diſorder. This diſtemper of the mind ſeizes them upon the leaſt occaſion in the world, and perpetually without any real reaſon at all: and by means of it they are plainly, every day, every waking hour of

their lives, liable and in danger of running into the moſt extravagant outrages. Of a leſs boiſterous, but not of a leſs innocent kind, is peeviſhneſs; which I mention with pity, with real pity to the unhappy creatures, who, from their inferiour ſtation, or other circumſtances and relations, are obliged to be in the way of, and to ſerve for a ſupply to it. Both theſe, for ought that I can ſee, are one and the ſame principle: but as it takes root in minds of different makes, it appears differently, and ſo is come to be diſtinguiſhed by different names. That which in a more feeble temper is peeviſhneſs, and languidly diſcharges itſelf upon every thing which comes in its way; the ſame principle, in a temper of greater force and ſtronger paſſions, becomes rage and fury. In one, the humour diſcharges itſelf at once; in the other, it is continually diſcharging. This is the account of paſſion and peeviſhneſs, as diſtinct from each other, and appearing in different perſons. It is no objection againſt the truth of it, that they are both to be ſeen ſometimes in one and the ſame perſon.

With reſpect to deliberate reſentment, the

chief inſtances of abuſe are: when, from partiality to ourſelves, we imagine an injury done us, when there is none: when this partiality repreſents it to us greater than it really is: when we fall into that extravagant and monſtrous kind of reſentment, towards one who has innocently been the occaſion of evil to us; that is, reſentment upon account of pain or inconvenience, without injury; which is the ſame abſurdity, as ſettled anger at a thing that is inanimate: when the indignation againſt injury and injuſtice riſes too high, and is beyond proportion to the particular ill action it is exerciſed upon: or laſtly, when pain or harm of any kind is inflicted merely in conſequence of, and to gratify that reſentment, tho' naturally raiſed.

It would be endleſs to deſcend into and explain all the peculiarities of perverſeneſs, and wayward humour, which might be traced up to this paſſion. But there is one thing, which ſo generally belongs to and accompanies all exceſs and abuſe of it, as to require being mentioned: a certain determination, and reſolute bent of mind, not to he convinced or ſet right; though it be ever ſo plain, that there

is no reaſon for the diſpleaſure, that it was raiſed merely by error or miſunderſtanding. In this there is doubtleſs a great mixture of pride; but there is ſomewhat more, which I cannot otherwiſe expreſs than, that reſentment has taken poſſeſſion of the temper and of the mind, and will not quit its hold. It would be too minute, to inquire whether this be any more than bare obſtinacy: it is ſufficient to obſerve, that it, in a very particular manner and degree, belongs to the abuſes of this paſſion.

But, notwithſtanidng all theſe abuſes; "Is "not juſt indignation againſt cruelty and "wrong, one of the *inſtruments of death* "which the author of our nature hath pro-"vided? Are not cruelty, injuſtice and wrong, "the natural objects of that indignation? "Surely then it may one way or other be in-"nocently employed againſt them." True. Since therefor it is neceſſary for the very ſubſiſtence of the world, that injury, injuſtice and cruelty, ſhould be puniſhed; and ſince compaſſion, which is ſo natural to mankind, would render that execution of juſtice exceedingly difficult and uneaſy; indignation againſt vice

and wickedneſs is, and may be allowed to be, a balance to that weakneſs of pity, and alſo to any thing elſe which would prevent the neceſſary methods of ſeverity. Thoſe, who have never thought upon theſe ſubjects, may perhaps not ſee the weight of this: but let us ſuppoſe a perſon guilty of murder, or any other action of cruelty, and that mankind had naturally no indignation againſt ſuch wickedneſs and the authors of it; but that every body was affected towards ſuch a criminal in the ſame way, as towards an innocent man: compaſſion, amongſt other things, would render the execution of juſtice exceedingly painful and difficult, and would often quite prevent it. And notwithſtanding that the principle of benevolence is denied by ſome, and is really in a very low degree, that men are in great meaſure inſenſible to the happineſs of their fellow-creatures; yet they are not inſenſible to their miſery, but are very ſtrongly moved with it; inſomuch that there plainly is occaſion for that feeling which is raiſed by guilt and demerit, as a balance to that of compaſſion. Thus much may I think juſtly be allowed to reſent-

ment, in the ſtricteſt way of moral conſideration.

THE good influence which this paſſion has in fact upon the affairs of the world, is obvious to every one's notice. Men are plainly reſtrained from injuring their fellow-creatures by fear of their reſentment; and it is very happy that they are ſo, when they would not be reſtrained by a principle of virtue. And after an injury is done, and there is a neceſſity that the offender ſhould be brought to juſtice; the cool conſideration of reaſon, that the ſecurity and peace of ſociety requires examples of juſtice ſhould be made, might indeed be ſufficient to procure laws to be enacted, and ſentence paſſed: but is it that cool reflection in the injured perſon, which, for the moſt part, brings the offended to juſtice? or is it not reſentment and indignation againſt the injury and the author it? I am afraid there is no doubt, which is commonly the caſe. This however is to be conſidered as a good effect, notwithſtanding it were much to be wiſhed that men would act from a better principle, reaſon and cool reflection.

THE account now given of the paſſion of reſentment, as diſtinct from all the abuſes of it, may ſuggeſt to our thoughts the following reflections.

Firſt, That vice is indeed of ill-deſert, and muſt finally be puniſhed. Why ſhould men diſpute concerning the reality of virtue, and whether it be founded in the nature of things, which yet ſurely is not matter of queſtion; but why ſhould this, I ſay, be diſputed, when every man carries about him this paſſion, which affords him demonſtration, that the rules of juſtice and equity are to be the guide of his actions? For every man naturally feels an indignation upon ſeeing inſtances of villany and baſeneſs, and therefor cannot commit the ſame without being ſelf-condemned.

Secondly, That we ſhould learn to be cautious leſt we *charge God fooliſhly*, by aſcribing that to him, or the nature he has given us, which is owing wholly to our own abuſe of it. Men may ſpeak of the degeneracy and corruption of the world, according to the experience they have had of it; but human nature, conſidered as the divine workmanſhip, ſhould me-

thinks be treated as ſacred: for *in the image of God made he man.* That paſſion, from whence men take occaſion to run into the dreadful vices of malice and revenge; even that paſſion, as implanted in our nature by God, is not only innocent, but a generous movement of mind. It is in itſelf, and in its original, no more than indignation againſt injury and wickedneſs: that which is the only deformity in the creation, and the only reaſonable object of abhorrence and diſlike. How manifold evidence have we of the divine wiſdom and goodneſs, when even pain in the natural world, and the paſſion, we have been now conſidering in the moral, come out inſtances of it!

SERMON IX.

Upon Forgiveneſs of Injuries.

MATTH. v. 43, 44.

Ye have heard that it hath been ſaid, thou ſhalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy: but I ſay unto you, love your enemies, bleſs them that curſe you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which deſpitefully uſe you and perſecute you.

AS God Almighty foreſaw the irregularities and diſorders, both natural and moral, which would happen in this ſtate of things; he hath graciouſly made ſome proviſion againſt them, by giving us ſeveral paſſions and affections, which ariſe from, or whoſe objects are thoſe diſorders. Of this ſort are fear, reſentment, compaſſion and others; of which there

could be no occaſion or uſe in a perfect ſtate: but in the preſent, we ſhould be expoſed to greater inconveniences without them; though there are very conſiderable ones, which they themſelves are the occaſions of. They are incumbrances indeed, but ſuch as we are obliged to carry about with us, through this various journey of life: ſome of them as a guard againſt the violent aſſaults of others, and in our own defence; ſome in behalf of others; and all of them to put us upon, and help to carry us through, a courſe of behaviour ſuitable to our condition, in default of that perfection of wiſdom and virtue, which would be in all reſpects our better ſecurity.

THE paſſion of anger or reſentment hath already been largely treated of. It hath been ſhown, that mankind naturally feel ſome emotion of mind againſt injury and injuſtice, whoever are the ſufferers by it; and even though the injurious deſign be prevented from taking effect. Let this be called anger, indignation, reſentment, or by whatever name any one ſhall chuſe; the thing itſelf is underſtood, and is plainly natural. It has likewiſe been obſerv-

ed, that this natural indignation is generally moderate and low enough in mankind, in each particular man, when the injury which excites it doth not affect himſelf, or one whom he conſiders as himſelf. Therefor the precepts to *forgive*, and to *love our enemies*, do not relate to that general indignation againſt injury and the authors of it, but to this feeling, or reſentment, when raiſed by private or perſonal injury. But no man could be thought in earneſt, who ſhould aſſert, that, though indignation againſt injury, when others are the ſufferers, is innocent and juſt; yet the ſame indignation againſt it, when we ourſelves are the ſufferers, becomes faulty and blameable. Theſe precepts therefor cannot be underſtood to forbid this in the latter caſe, more than in the former. Nay they cannot be underſtood to forbid this feeling in the latter caſe, though raiſed to a higher degree, than in the former: becauſe, as was alſo obſerved further, from the very conſtitution of our nature, we cannot but have a greater ſenſibility to what concerns ourſelves. Therefor the precepts in the text, and others of the like import with them, muſt be under-

ſtood to forbid only the exceſs and abuſe of this natural feeling, in caſes of perſonal and private injury: the chief inſtances of which exceſs and abuſe have likewiſe been already remarked; and all of them, excepting that of retaliation, do ſo plainly in the very terms expreſs ſomewhat unreaſonable, diſproportionate and abſurd, as to admit of no pretence or ſhadow of juſtification.

But ſince cuſtom and falſe honour are on the ſide of retaliation and revenge, when the reſentment is natural and juſt; and reaſons are ſometimes offered in juſtification of revenge in theſe caſes; and ſince love of our enemies is thought *too hard a ſaying* to be obeyed: I will ſhew *the abſolute unlawfulneſs of the former; the obligations we are under to the latter;* and then proceed to *ſome reflections which may have a more direct and immediate tendency to beget in us a right temper of mind towards thoſe who have offended us.*

In ſhewing the unlawfulneſs of revenge, it is not my preſent deſign to examine what is alleged in favour of it, from the tyranny of cuſtom and falſe honour, but only to conſider

the nature and reaſon of the thing itſelf; which ought to have prevented, and ought now to extirpate, every thing of that kind.

Firſt, Let us begin with the ſuppoſition of that being innocent, which is pleaded for, and which ſhall be ſhewn to be altogether vicious, the ſuppoſition that we were allowed to *render evil for evil*, and ſee what would be the conſequence. Malice or reſentment towards any man hath plainly a tendency to beget the ſame paſſion in him who is the object of it; and this again increaſes it in the other. It is of the very nature of this vice to propagate itſelf, not only by way of example, which it does in common with other vices, but in a peculiar way of its own; for reſentment itſelf, as well as what is done in conſequence of it, is the object of reſentment: hence it comes to paſs that the firſt offence, even when ſo ſlight as preſently to be dropt and forgotten, becomes the occaſion of entering into a long intercourſe of ill offices: neither is it at all uncommon to ſee perſons, in this progreſs of ſtrife and variance, change parts; and him, who was at firſt the

injured perſon, become more injurious and blameable than the aggreſſor. Put the caſe then, that the law of retaliation was univerſally received, and allowed, as an innocent rule of life, by all; and the obſervance of it thought by many, (and then it would ſoon come to be thought by all,) a point of honour: this ſuppoſes every man in private caſes to paſs ſentence in his own cauſe; and likewiſe, that anger or reſentment is to be the judge. Thus, from the numberleſs partialities which we all have for ourſelves, every one would often think himſelf injured when he was not; and in moſt caſes would repreſent an injury as much greater than it really is; the imagined dignity of the perſon offended would ſcarce ever fail to magnify the offence. And, if bare retaliation, or returning juſt the miſchief received, always begets reſentment in the perſon upon whom we retaliate, what would that exceſs do? Add to this, that he likewiſe has his partialities—— There is no going on to repreſent this ſcene of rage and madneſs: it is manifeſt there would be no bounds, nor any end. *If the beginning of ſtrife is as when one letteth out water*, what

would it come to when allowed this free and unreſtrained courſe? *As coals are to burning coals, or wood to fire; ſo* would theſe *contentious men be to kindle ſtrife.* And, ſince the indulgence of revenge hath manifeſtly this tendency, and does actually produce theſe effects in proportion as it allowed; a paſſion of ſo dangerous a nature ought not to be indulged, were there no other reaſon againſt it.

Secondly, It hath been ſhewn that the paſſion of reſentment was placed in man, upon ſuppoſition of, and as a prevention or remedy to irregularity and diſorder. Now whether it be allowed, that the paſſion itſelf and gratification of it joined together are painful to the malicious perſon; it muſt however be ſo with reſpect to the perſon towards whom it is exerciſed, and upon whom the revenge is taken. Now, if we conſider mankind, according to that fine alluſion of St, Paul, as *one body, and every one members one of another;* it muſt be allowed that reſentment is, with reſpect to ſociety, a painful remedy. Thus then the very notion or idea of this paſſion, as a remedy or prevention of evil, and as in itſelf a painful

means, plainly ſhews that it ought never to be made uſe of, but only in order to produce ſome greater good.

It is to be obſerved, that this argument is not founded upon an alluſion or ſimile; but that it is drawn from the very nature of the paſſion itſelf, and the end for which it was given us. We are obliged to make uſe of words taken from ſenſible things, to explain what is the moſt remote from them: and every one ſees, from whence the words prevention and remedy are taken. But if you pleaſe, let theſe words be dropped: the thing itſelf, I ſuppoſe, may be expreſſed without them.

That mankind is a community, that we all ſtand in relation to each other, that there is a public end and intereſt of ſociety which each particular is obliged to promote, is the ſum of morals. Conſider then the paſſion of reſentment, as given to this one body, as given to ſociety. Nothing can be more manifeſt, than that reſentment is to be conſidered as a ſecondary paſſion, placed in us upon ſuppoſition, upon account of, and with regard to injury; not, to be ſure, to promote and further

it, but to render it, and the inconveniences and miſeries ariſing from it, leſs and fewer than they would be without this paſſion. It is as manifeſt, that the indulgence of it is, with regard to ſociety, a painful means of obtaining theſe ends. Conſidered in itſelf, it is very undeſirable, and what ſociety muſt very much wiſh to be without. It is in every inſtance abſolutely an evil itſelf; becauſe it implies producing miſery: and conſequently muſt never be indulged or gratified for itſelf, by any one who conſiders mankind as a community or family, and himſelf as a member of it.

Let us now take this in another view. Every natural appetite, paſſion and affection, may be gratified in particular inſtances, without being ſubſervient to the particular chief end, for which theſe ſeveral principles were reſpectively implanted in our nature. And, if neither this end, nor any other moral obligation be contradicted, ſuch gratification is innocent. Thus, I ſuppoſe, there are caſes in which each of theſe principles, this one of reſentment excepted, may innocently be gratified, without being ſubſervient to what is the

main end of it: that is, though it does not conduce to, yet it may be gratified without contradicting that end, or any other obligation. But the gratification of reſentment, if it be not conducive to the end for which it was given us, muſt neceſſarily contradict not only the general obligation to benevolence, but likewiſe that particular end itſelf. The end, for which it was given, is to prevent or remedy injury; that is, the miſery occaſioned by injury; that is, miſery itſelf: and the gratification of it conſiſts in producing miſery; that is, in contradicting the end, for which it was implanted in our nature.

THIS whole reaſoning is built upon the difference there is between this paſſion and all others. No other principle, or paſſion, hath for its end the miſery of our fellow-creatures. But malice and revenge meditates evil itſelf; and to do miſchief, to be the author of miſery, is the very thing which gratifies the paſſion: this is what it directly tends towards, as its proper deſign. Other vices eventually do miſchief: this alone aims as it as an end.

NOTHING can with reaſon be urged in ju-

ſtification of revenge, from the good effects which the indulgence of it were before mentioned * to have upon the affairs of the world; becauſe, though it be a remarkable inſtance of providence to bring good out of evil, yet vice is vice to him who is guilty of it. "But ſuppoſe theſe good effects are foreſeen:" that is, ſuppoſe reaſon in a particular caſe leads a man the ſame way as paſſion? Why then, to be ſure, he ſhould follow his reaſon, in this as well as in all other caſes. So that, turn the matter which way ever you will, no more can be allowed to this paſſion, than that hath been already †.

As to that love of our enemies, which is commanded; this ſuppoſes the general obligation to benevolence or good-will towards mankind: and this being ſuppoſed, that precept is no more than to forgive injuries; that is, to keep clear of thoſe abuſes before-mentioned: becauſe, that we have the habitual temper of benevolence. is taken for granted.

RESENTMENT is not inconſiſtent with good-

* Serm. VIII. † Serm. VIII.

will; for we often ſee both together in very high degrees; not only in parents towards their children, but in caſes of friendſhip and dependance, where there is no natural relation. Theſe contrary paſſions, though they leſſen, do not neceſſarily deſtroy each other. We may therefor love our enemy, and yet have reſentment againſt him for his injurious behaviour towards us. But when this reſentment intirely deſtroys our natural benevolence towards him, it is exceſſive, and becomes malice or revenge. The command, to prevent its having this effect, that is, to forgive injuries, is the ſame as to love our enemies; becauſe that love is always ſuppoſed, unleſs deſtroyed by reſentment.

"BUT though mankind is the natural ob-
"ject of benevolence, yet may it not be leſ-
"ſened upon vice, *i. e.* injury?" Allowed: but if every degree of vice or injury muſt deſtroy that benevolence, then no man is the object of our love; for no man is without faults.

"BUT if lower inſtances of injury may leſ-
"ſen our benevolence, why may not higher,
"or the higheſt, deſtroy it?" The anſwer is

obvious. It is not man's being a ſocial creature, much leſs his being a moral agent, from whence alone our obligations to good-will towards him ariſe. There is an obligation to it prior to either of theſe, ariſing from his being a ſenſible creature; that is, capable of happineſs or miſery. Now this obligation cannot be ſuperſeded by his moral character. What juſtifies public executions is, not that the guilt or demerit of the criminal diſpenſes with the obligation of good-will, neither would this juſtify any ſeverity; but that his life is inconſiſtent with the quiet and happineſs of the world: that is, a general and more enlarged obligation neceſſarily deſtroys a particular and more confined one of the ſame kind, inconſiſtent with it. Guilt or injury then does not diſpenſe with or ſuperſede the duty of love and good-will.

NEITHER does that peculiar regard to ourſelves, which was before allowed to be natural * to mankind, diſpenſe with it: becauſe that can no way innocently heighten our reſent-

* Serm. VIII.

ment againſt thoſe who have been injurious to ourſelves in particular, any otherwiſe than as it heightens our ſenſe of the injury or guilt; and guilt, though in the higheſt degree, does not, as hath been ſhewn, diſpenſe with or ſuperſede the duty of love and good-will.

If all this be true, what can a man ſay, who will diſpute the reaſonableneſs, or the poſſibility, of obeying the divine precept we are now conſidering? Let him ſpeak out, and it muſt be thus he will ſpeak. "Mankind, that is, a "creature defective and faulty, is the proper "object of good-will, whatever his faults are, "when they reſpect others; but not when they "reſpect me my ſelf." That men ſhould be affected in this manner, and act accordingly, is to be accounted for like other vices; but to aſſert that it ought, and muſt be thus, is ſelf-partiality poſſeſſed of the very underſtanding.

Thus love to our enemies, and thoſe who have been injurious to us, is ſo far from being a rant, as it has been prophanely called, that it is in truth the law of our nature, and what every one muſt ſee and own, who is not quite blinded with ſelf-love.

FROM henee it is eaſy to ſee, what is the degree in which we are commanded to love our enemies, or thoſe who have been injurious to us. It were well if it could as eaſily be reduced to practice. It cannot be imagined, that we are required to love them with any peculiar kind of affection. But ſuppoſe the perſon injured to have a due, natural ſenſe of the injury, and no more; he ought to be affected towards the injurious perſon in the ſame way any good men, unintereſted in the caſe, would be; if they had the ſame juſt ſenſe, which we have ſuppoſed the injured perſon to have, of the fault: after which there will yet remain real good-will towards the offender.

Now what is there in all this, which ſhould be thought impracticable? I am ſure there is nothing in it unreaſonable. It is indeed no more than that we ſhould not indulge a paſſion, which, if generally indulged, would propagate itſelf ſo as almoſt to lay waſte the world: that we ſhould ſuppreſs that partial, that falſe ſelf-love, which is the weakneſs of our nature: that uneaſineſs and miſery ſhould not be produced, without any good purpoſe to be ſerved

by it: and that we ſhould not be affected towards perſons differently from what their nature and character require.

But ſince to be convinced that any temper of mind, and courſe of behaviour, is our duty, and the contrary vitious, hath but a diſtant influence upon our temper and actions; let me add ſome few reflections, which may have a more direct tendency to ſubdue thoſe vices in the heart, to beget in us this right temper, and lead us to a right behaviour towards thoſe who have offended us: which reflections however ſhall be ſuch as will further ſhew the obligations we are under to it.

No one, I ſuppoſe, would chuſe to have an indignity put upon him, or to be injuriouſly treated. If then there be any probability of a miſunderſtanding in the caſe, either from our imagining we are injured when we are not, or repreſenting the injury to ourſelves as greater than it really is; one would hope an intimation of this ſort might be kindly received, and that people would be glad to find the injury not ſo great as they imagined. Therefor without knowing particulars, I take upon me to

aſſure all perſons who think they have received indignities or injurious treatment, that they may depend upon it, as in a manner certain, that the offence is not ſo great as they themſelves imagine. We are in ſuch a peculiar ſtation, with reſpect to injuries done to ourſelves, that we can ſcarce any more ſee them as they really are, than our eye can ſee itſelf. If we could place ourſelves at a due diſtance, that is, be really unprejudiced, we ſhould frequently diſcern, that to be in reality inadvertence and miſtake in our enemy, which we now fancy we ſee to be malice or ſcorn. From this proper point of view, we ſhould likewiſe in all probability ſee ſomething of theſe latter in ourſelves, and moſt certainly a great deal of the former. Thus the indignity or injury, would almoſt infinitely leſſen, and perhaps at laſt come out to be nothing at all. Self-love is a medium of a peculiar kind: in theſe caſes it magnifies every thing which is amiſs in others, at the ſame time that it leſſens every thing amiſs in ourſelves.

ANGER alſo or hatred may be conſidered as another falſe medium of viewing things, which

always repreſents characters and actions much worſe than they really are. Ill-will not only never ſpeaks, but never thinks well, of the perſon towards whom it is exerciſed. Thus in caſes of offence and enmity, the whole character and behaviour is conſidered with an eye to that particular part of behaviour which gave offence; ſince the other parts of a man's life and character ſtand juſt the ſame as they did before.

In general, there are very few inſtances of enmity carried to any length, but inadvertency, miſunderſtanding, ſome real miſtake of the caſe, on one ſide however, if not on both, has a great ſhare in it.

If theſe things were attended to, theſe ill-humours could not be carried to any length amongſt good men, and they would be exceedingly abated amongſt all. And one would hope they might be attended to: for all that theſe cautions come to, is really no more than deſiring, that things may be conſidered and judged of as they are in themſelves, that we ſhould have an eye to, and beware of, what ſhould otherwiſe lead us into miſtakes. So that

to make allowances for inadvertence, miſunderſtanding, for the partialities of ſelf-love, and the falſe light which anger ſets things in; I ſay, to make allowances for theſe, is not to be ſpoken of as an inſtance of humbleneſs of mind, or meekneſs and moderation of temper; but as what common ſenſe ſhould ſuggeſt, to avoid judging wrong of a matter before us, though virtue and morals were out of the caſe. And therefor it as much belongs to ill men, who will indulge the vice I have been arguing againſt; as to good men, who endeavour to ſubdue it in themſelves. In a word, all theſe cautions concerning anger and ſelf-love are no more than deſiring a man, who was looking through a glaſs which either magnified or leſſened, to take notice that the objects are not in themſelves what they appear through that medium.

To all theſe things one might add, that reſentment being out of the caſe, there is not properly ſpeaking any ſuch thing as direct ill-will in one man towards another: therefor the firſt indignity or injury, if it be not owing to inadvertence or miſunderſtanding, may how-

ever be reſolved into other particular paſſions or ſelf-love: principles quite diſtinct from ill-will, and which we ought all to be diſpoſed to excuſe in others, from experiencing ſo much of them in ourſelves. A great man of antiquity is reported to have ſaid, that, as he never was indulgent to any one fault in himſelf, he could not excuſe thoſe of others. This ſentence could ſcarce with decency come out of the mouth of any human creature. But if we invert the former part, and put it thus: that he was indulgent to many faults in himſelf, as it is to be feared the beſt of us are, and yet was implacable; how monſtrous would ſuch an aſſertion appear? and this is the caſe in reſpect to every human creature, in proportion as he is without the forgiving ſpirit I have been recommending.

FURTHER, Though injury, injuſtice, oppreſſion, the baſeneſs of ingratitude, are the natural objects of indignation, or if you pleaſe of reſentment, as before explained; yet they are likewiſe the objects of compaſſion, as they are their own puniſhment, and without repentance will for ever be ſo. No one ever did a

deſigned injury to another, but at the ſame time he did a much greater to himſelf. If therefor we would conſider things juſtly, ſuch an one is, according to the natural courſe of our affections, an object of compaſſion, as well as of diſpleaſure: and to be affected really in this manner, I ſay really, in oppreſſion to ſhow and pretence, argues the true greatneſs of mind. We have an example of forgiveneſs in this way in its utmoſt perfection, and which indeed includes in it all that is good, in that prayer of our bleſſed Saviour on the croſs: *Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.*

But *laſtly*, The offences which we are all guilty of againſt God, and the injuries which men do to each other, are often mentioned together: and, making allowances for the infinite diſtance between the majeſty of heaven, and a frail mortal, and likewiſe for this, that he cannot poſſibly be affected or moved as we are; offences committed by others againſt ourſelves, and the manner in which we are apt to be affected with them, give a real occaſion for calling to mind our own ſins againſt God.

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deſigned injury to another, but at the ſame time he did a much greater to himſelf. If therefor we would conſider things juſtly, ſuch an one is, according to the natural courſe of our affections, an object of compaſſion, as well as of diſpleaſure: and to be affected really in this manner, I ſay really, in oppreſſion to ſhow and pretence, argues the true greatneſs of mind. We have an example of forgiveneſs in this way in its utmoſt perfection, and which indeed includes in it all that is good, in that prayer of our bleſſed Saviour on the croſs: *Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.*

But *laſtly*, The offences which we are all guilty of againſt God, and the injuries which men do to each other, are often mentioned together: and, making allowances for the infinite diſtance between the majeſty of heaven, and a frail mortal, and likewiſe for this, that he cannot poſſibly be affected or moved as we are; offences committed by others againſt ourſelves, and the manner in which we are apt to be affected with them, give a real occaſion for calling to mind our own ſins againſt God.

Now there is an apprehenſion and pre-ſentiment natural to mankind, that we ourſelves ſhall one time or other be dealt with, as we deal with others; and a peculiar acquieſcence in, and feeling of the equity and juſtice of this equal diſtribution. This natural notion of equity the ſon of Sirach has put in the ſtrongeſt way. * *He that revengeth ſhall find vengeance from the Lord, and he will ſurely keep his ſins in remembrance. Forgive thy neighbour the hurt he hath done unto thee, ſo ſhall thy ſins alſo be forgiven when thou prayeſt. One man beareth hatred againſt another, and doth he ſeek pardon from the Lord? He ſheweth no mercy to a man which is like himſelf; and doth he aſk forgiveneſs of his own ſins?* Let any one read our Saviour's parable of *the king who took account of his ſervants* †; and the equity and rightneſs of the ſentence, which was paſſed upon him who was unmerciful to his fellow-ſervant, will be felt. There is ſomewhat in human nature, which accords to, and falls in with that method of determination. Let us

* Ecclus xxviii. 1—4. † Matth. xviii.

then place before our eyes the time which is repreſented in the parable; that of our own death, or the final judgment. Suppoſe yourſelves under the apprehenſions of approaching death; that you were juſt going to appear naked and without diſguiſe before the judge of all the earth, to give an account of your behaviour towards your fellow-creatures: could any thing raiſe more dreadful apprehenſions of that judgment, than the reflection that you had been implacable, and without mercy towards thoſe who had offended you: without that forgiving ſpirit towards others, which, that it may now be exerciſed towards yourſelves, is your only hope? and theſe natural apprehenſions are authorized by our Saviour's application of the parable: *So likewiſe ſhall my heavenly father do likewiſe unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their treſpaſſes.* On the other hand, ſuppoſe a good man in the ſame circumſtance, in the laſt part and cloſe of life; conſcious of many frailties, as the beſt are, but conſcious too that he had been meek, forgiving and merciful; that he had in ſimplicity of heart been

ready to paſs over offences againſt himſelf: the having felt this good ſpirit will give him, not only a full view of the amiableneſs of it, but the ſureſt hope that he will meet with it in his judge. This likewiſe is confirmed by his own declaration: *If ye forgive men their treſpaſſes, your heavenly father will likewiſe forgive you.* And that we might have a conſtant ſenſe of it upon our mind, the condition is expreſſed in our daily prayer. A forgiving ſpirit is therefor abſolutely neceſſary, as ever we hope for pardon of our own ſins; as ever we hope for peace of mind in our dying moments, or for the divine mercy at that day when we ſhall moſt ſtand in need of it.

SERMON X.

Upon SELF-DECEIT.

2 SAM. xii. 7.

And Nathan ſaid to David, Thou art the man.

THESE words are the application of Nathan's parable to David, upon occaſion of his adultery with Bethſheba, and the murder of Uriah her huſband. The parable, which is related in the moſt beautiful ſimplicity, is this. * *There were two men in one city; the one rich and the other poor. The rich man had exceeding many flocks and herds: but the poor man had nothing ſave one little ew-lamb, which he had bought and nouriſhed up: and it grew up together with him, and with his chil-*

* Ver. 1.

dren; it did eat of his own meat, and drink of his own cup, and lay in his boſom, and was unto him as a daughter. And there came a traveller unto the rich man, and he ſpared to take of his own flock, and of his own herd, to dreſs for the way-faring man that was come unto him, but took the poor man's lamb, and dreſſed it for the man that was come to him. And David's anger was greatly kindled againſt the man, and he ſaid to Nathan, As the Lord liveth, the man that hath done this thing ſhall ſurely die. And he ſhall reſtore the lamb four-fold, becauſe he did this thing, and becauſe he had no pity. David paſſes ſentence, not only that there ſhould be a four-fold reſtitution made; but he proceeds to the rigour of juſtice, *the man that hath done this thing ſhall die:* and this judgment is pronounced with the utmoſt indignation againſt ſuch an act of inhumanity; *As the Lord liveth, he ſhall ſurely die; and his anger was greatly kindled againſt the man.* And the prophet anſwered, *Thou art the man.* He had been guilty of much greater inhumanity, with the utmoſt deliberation, thought and contrivance. Near a

year muſt have paſſed, between the time of the commiſſion of his crimes, and the time of the prophet's coming to him; and it does not appear from the ſtory, that he had in all this while the leaſt remorſe or contrition.

THERE is not any thing, relating to men and characters, more ſurprizing and unaccountable, than this partiality to themſelves, which is obſervable in many; as there is nothing of more melancholy reflection, reſpecting morality, virtue and religion. Hence it is, that many men ſeem perfect ſtrangers to their own characters. They think, and reaſon, and judge quite differently upon any matter relating to themſelves, from what they do in caſes of others where they are not intereſted. Hence it is one hears people expoſing follies, which they themſelves are eminent for; and talking with great ſeverity againſt particular vices, which, if all the world be not miſtaken, they themſelves are notoriouſly guilty of. This ſelf-ignorance and ſelf-partiality may be in all different degrees. It is a lower degree of it, which David himſelf refers to in theſe words, *Who can tell how oft he offendeth? O cleanſe*

thou me from my ſecret faults. This is the ground of that advice of Elihu to Job: *Surely it is meet to be ſaid unto God,—That which I ſee not, teach thou me; if I have done iniquity, I will do no more.* And Solomon ſaw this thing in a very ſtrong light, when he ſaid, *He that truſteth his own heart is a fool.* This likewiſe was the reaſon why that precept, *Know thy ſelf,* was ſo frequently inculcated by the philoſophers of old, For if it were not for that partial and fond regard to ourſelves, it would certainly be no great difficulty to know our own character, what paſſes within, the bent and bias of our mind; much leſs would there be any difficulty in judging rightly of our own actions. But from this partiality it frequently comes to paſs, that the obſervation, of many men's being themſelves laſt of all acquainted with what falls out in their own families, may be applied to a nearer home, to what paſſes within their own breaſts.

THERE is plainly, in the generality of mankind, an abſence of doubt or diſtruſt, in a very great meaſure, as to their moral character and behaviour; and likewiſe a diſpoſition to take

for granted, that all is right and well with them in theſe reſpects. The former is owing to their not reflecting, not exerciſing their judgment upon themſelves; the latter to ſelf-love. I am not ſpeaking of that extravagance, which is ſometimes to be met with; inſtances of perſons declaring in words at length, that they never were in the wrong, nor had ever any diffidence to the juſtneſs of their conduct, in their whole lives. No, theſe people are too far gone to have any thing ſaid to them. The thing before us is indeed of this kind, but in a lower degree, and confined to the moral character; ſomewhat of which we almoſt all of us have, without reflecting upon it. Now conſider how long, and how groſly, a perſon of the beſt underſtanding might be impoſed upon by one of whom he had not any ſuſpicion, and in whom he placed an entire confidence; eſpecially if there were friendſhip and real kindneſs in the caſe: ſurely this holds even ſtronger with reſpect to that ſelf we are all ſo fond of. Hence ariſes in men a diſregard of reproof and inſtruction, rules of conduct and moral diſci-

pline, which occaſionally came in their way: a diſregard, I ſay, of theſe; not in every reſpect, but in this ſingle one, namely, as what may be of ſervice to them in particular towards their own hearts and tempers, and making them better men. It never in earneſt comes into their thoughts, whether ſuch admonitions may not relate, and be of ſervice to themſelves; and this quite diſtinct from a poſitive perſuaſion to the contrary, a perſuaſion from reflection that they are innocent and blameleſs in thoſe reſpects. Thus we may invert the obſervation which is ſomewhere made upon Brutus, that he never read but in order to make himſelf a better man. It ſcarce comes into the thoughts of the generality of mankind, that this uſe is to be made of moral reflections which they meet with; that this uſe, I ſay, is to be made of them by themſelves, for every body obſerves and wonders that it is not done by others.

FURTHER, there are inſtances of perſons having ſo fixed and ſteady an eye upon their own intereſt, whatever they place it in, and the intereſt of thoſe whom they conſider as themſelves, as in a manner to regard nothing elſe;

their views are almoſt confined to this alone. Now we cannot be acquainted with, or in any propriety of ſpeech, be ſaid to know any thing but what we attend to. If therefore they attend only to one ſide, they really will not, cannot ſee or know what is to be alleged on the other. Though a man hath the beſt eyes in the world, he cannot ſee any way but that which he turns them. Thus theſe perſons, without paſſing over the leaſt, the moſt minute thing, which can poſſibly be urged in favour of themſelves, ſhall overlook intirely the plaineſt and moſt obvious things on the other ſide. And whilſt they are under the power of this temper, thought and conſideration upon the matter before them has ſcarce any tendency to ſet them right: becauſe they are engaged; and their deliberation concerning an action to be done, or reflection upon it afterwards, is not to ſee whether it be right, but to find out reaſons to juſtify or palliate it; palliate it, not to others, but to themſelves.

In ſome there is to be obſerved a general ignorance of themſelves, and wrong way of thinking and judging in every thing relating to

themſelves; their fortune, reputation, every thing in which ſelf can come in: and this perhaps attended with the righteſt judgment in all other matters. In others, this partiality is not ſo general, has not taken hold of the whole man, but is confined to ſome particular favourite paſſion, intereſt or purſuit; ſuppoſe ambition, covetouſneſs, or any other. And theſe perſons may probably judge and determine what is perfectly juſt and proper, even in things in which they themſelves are concerned, if theſe things have no relation to their particular favourite paſſion or purſuit. Hence ariſes that amazing incongruity, and ſeeming inconſiſtency of character, from whence ſlight obſervers take it for granted, that the whole is hypocritical and falſe; not being able otherwiſe to reconcile the ſeveral parts: whereas in truth there is real honeſty, ſo far as it goes. There is ſuch a thing as men's being honeſt to ſuch a degree, and in ſuch reſpects, but no further. And this, as it is true, ſo it is abſolutely neceſſary to be taken notice of, and allowed them; ſuch general and undiſtinguiſhing cenſure of their whole characters, as deſigning and

falſe, being one main thing which confirms them in their ſelf-deceit. They know that the whole cenſure is not true; and ſo take for granted that no part of it is.

But to go on with the explication of the thing itſelf: vice in general conſiſts in having an unreaſonable and too great regard to ourſelves, in compariſon of others. Robbery and murder is never from the love of injuſtice or cruelty, but to gratify ſome other paſſion, to gain ſome ſuppoſed advantage: and it is falſe ſelfiſhneſs alone, whether cool or paſſionate, which makes a man reſolutely purſue that end, be it ever ſo much to the injury of another. But whereas, in common and ordinary wickedneſs, this unreaſonablenefs, this partiality and ſelfiſhneſs relates only, or chiefly to the temper and paſſions; in the characters we are now conſidering, it reaches to the underſtanding, and influences the very judgment*. And, be-

* That peculiar regard for ourſelves, which frequently produces this partiality of judgment in our own favour, may have a quite contrary effect, and occaſion the utmoſt diffidence and diſtruſt of ourſelves; were it only, as it may ſet us upon a more frequent and ſtrict ſur-

ſides that general want of diſtruſt and diffidence concerning our own character, there are, you ſee, two things which may thus prejudice and darken the underſtanding itſelf: that overfondneſs for ourſelves, which we are all ſo liable to; and alſo being under the power of any particular paſſion or appetite, or engaged in

vey and review of our own character and behaviour. This ſearch or recollection itſelf implies ſomewhat of diffidence; and the diſcoveries we make, what is brought to our view, may poſſibly increaſe it. Good-will to another may either blind our judgment, ſo as to make us over-look his faults: or it may put us upon exerciſing that judgment with greater ſtrictneſs, to ſee whether he is ſo faultleſs and perfect as we wiſh him. If that peculiar regard to ourſelves leads us to examine our own character with this greater ſeverity, in order really to improve and grow better, it is the moſt comendable turn of mind poſſible, and can ſcarce be to exceſs. But if, as every thing hath its counterfeit, we are ſo much employed about ourſelves in order to diſguiſe what is amiſs, and to make a better appearance; or if our attention to ourſelves has chiefly this effect; it is liable to run up into the greateſt weakneſs and exceſs, and is like all other exceſſes its own diſappointment: for ſcarce any ſhow themſelves to advantage, who are over ſolicitous of doing ſo.

any particular purſuit. And theſe, eſpecially the laſt of the two, may be in ſo great a degree, as to influence our judgment, even of other perſons and their behaviour. Thus a man, whoſe temper is formed to ambition or covetouſneſs, ſhall even approve of them ſometimes in others.

THIS ſeems to be in a good meaſure the account of ſelf-partiality and ſelf-deceit, when traced up to its original. Whether it be, or be not thought ſatisfactory, that there is ſuch a thing is manifeſt; and that it is the occaſion of great part of the unreaſonable behaviour of men towards each other: that by means of it they palliate their vices and follies to themſelves: and that it prevents their applying to themſelves thoſe reproofs and inſtructions, which they meet with either in ſcripture or in moral and religious diſcourſes, though exactly ſuitable to the ſtate of their own mind, and the courſe of their behaviour. There is one thing further to be added here, that the temper we diſtinguiſh by hardneſs of heart with reſpect to others, joined with this ſelf-partiality, will carry a man almoſt any lengths of wickedneſs,

in the way of oppreſſion, hard uſage of others, and even to plain injuſtice; without his having, from what appears, any real ſenſe at all of it. This, indeed, was not the general character of David: for he plainly gave ſcope to the affections of compaſſion and good-will, as well as to his paſſions of another kind.

But as ſome occaſions and circumſtances lie more open to this ſelf-deceit, and give it greater ſcope and opportunities than others, theſe require to be particularly mentioned.

It is to be obſerved then, that as there are expreſs determinate acts of wickedneſs, ſuch as murder, adultery, theft: ſo on the other hand, there are numberleſs caſes in which the vice and wickedneſs cannot be exactly defined; but conſiſts in a certain general temper and courſe of action, or in the neglect of ſome duty, ſuppoſe charity or any other, whoſe bounds and degrees are not fixed. This is the very province of ſelf-deceit and ſelf-partiality: here it governs without check or controul. "For "what commandment is there broken? Is "there a tranſgreſſion where there is no law? "a vice which cannot be defined?"

WHOEVER will conſider the whole commerce of human life, will ſee that a great part, perhaps the greateſt part, of the intercourſe amongſt mankind, cannot be reduced to fixed determinate rules. Yet in theſe caſes there is a right and a wrong: a merciful, a liberal, a kind and compaſſionate behaviour, which ſurely is our duty; and an unmerciful contracted ſpirit, an hard and oppreſſive courſe of behaviour, which is moſt certainly immoral and vitious. But who can define preciſely, wherein that contracted ſpirit and hard uſage of others conſiſt, as murder and theft may be defined? There is not a word in our language, which expreſſes more deteſtable wickedneſs than *oppreſſion*: yet the nature of this vice cannot be ſo exactly ſtated, nor the bounds of it ſo determinately marked, as that we ſhall be able to ſay in all inſtances, where rigid right and juſtice ends, and oppreſſion begins. In theſe caſes there is great latitude left, for every one to determine for, and conſequently to deceive himſelf. It is chiefly in theſe caſes that ſelf-deceit comes in; as every one muſt ſee that

there is much larger ſcope for it here, than in expreſs, ſingle, determinate acts of wickedneſs. However it comes in with reſpect to the circumſtances attending the moſt groſs and determinate acts of wickedneſs. Of this, the ſtory of David, now before us, affords the moſt aſtoniſhing inſtance. It is really prodigious, to ſee a man, before ſo remarkable for virtue and piety, going on deliberately from adultery to murder, with the ſame cool contrivance, and, from what appears, with as little diſturbance, as a man would endeavour to prevent the ill conſequences of a miſtake he had made in any common matter. That total inſenſibility of mind with reſpect to thoſe horrid crimes, after the commiſſion of them, manifeſtly ſhews that he did ſome way or other delude himſelf: and this could not be with reſpect to the crimes themſelves, they were ſo manifeſtly of the groſſeſt kind. What the particular circumſtances were, with which he extenuated them, and quieted and deceived himſelf, is not related.

HAVING thus explained the nature of internal hypocriſy and ſelf-deceit, and remarked the occaſions upon which it exerts itſelf; there

are ſeveral things further to be obſerved concerning it: that all of the ſources, to which it was traced up, are ſometimes obſervable together in one and the ſame perſon; but that one of them is more remarkable, and to a higher degree, in ſome, and others of them are ſo in others: that in general it is a complicated thing; and may be in all different degrees and kinds: that the temper itſelf is eſſentially in its own nature vitious and immoral. It is unfairneſs; it is diſhoneſty; it is falſeneſs of heart: and is therefor ſo far from extenuating guilt, that it is itſelf the greateſt of all guilt in proportion to the degree it prevails: for it is a corruption of the whole moral character in its principle. Our underſtanding, and ſenſe of good and evil, is the light and guide of life; *If therefor* this *light that is in thee be darkneſs, how great is that darkneſs?* * For this reaſon our Saviour puts an *evil eye* as the direct oppoſite to a *ſingle eye;* the abſence of that ſimplicity, which theſe laſt words imply, being itſelf evil and vitious. And whilſt men are

* Matth. vi. 23.

under the power of this temper, in proportion ſtill to the degree they are ſo, they are fortified on every ſide againſt conviction; and when they hear the vice and folly, of what is in truth their own courſe of life, expoſed in the juſteſt and ſtrongeſt manner, they will often aſſent to it, and even carry the matter farther; perſuading themſelves, one does not know how, but ſome way or other perſuading themſelves, that they are out of the caſe, and that it hath no relation to them. Yet, notwithſtanding this, there frequently appears a ſuſpicion, that all is not right, or as it ſhould be; and perhaps there is always at bottom ſomewhat of this ſort. There are doubtleſs many inſtances of the ambitious, the revengeful, and covetous, and thoſe whom with too great indulgence we only call the men of pleaſure, who will not allow themſelves to think how guilty they are, who explain and argue away their guilt to themſelves: and though they do really impoſe upon themſelves in ſome meaſure, yet there are none of them but have, if not a proper knowlege, yet at leaſt, an implicit ſuſpicion, where the weakneſs lies, and what part of

their behavious they have reaſon to wiſh unknown or forgotten for ever. Truth, and real good ſenſe, and thorough integrity, carry along with them a peculiar conſciouſneſs of their own genuineneſs: there is a feeling belonging to them, which does not accompany their counterfeits, error, folly, half-honeſty, partial and ſlight regards to virtue and right, ſo far only as they are conſiſtent with that courſe of gratification which men happen to be ſet upon. And, if this be the caſe; it is much the ſame, as if we ſhould ſuppoſe a man to have had a general view of ſome ſcene, enough to ſatisfy him that it was very diſagreeable, and then to ſhut his eyes, that he might not have a particular or diſtinct view of its ſeveral deformities. It is as eaſy to cloſe the eyes of the mind as thoſe of the body: and the former is more frequently done with wilfulneſs, and yet not attended to, than the latter; the actions of the mind being more quick and tranſient, than thoſe of the ſenſes. This may be further illuſtrated by another thing obſervable in ordinary life. It is not uncommon for perſons, who run out their fortunes, intirely to neglect looking into

the ſtate of their affairs, and this from a general knowlege, that the condition of them is bad. Theſe extravagant people are perpetually ruined before they themſelves expected it: and they tell you for an excuſe, and tell you truly, that they did not think they were ſo much in debt, or that their expences ſo far exceeded their income. And yet no one will take this for an excuſe, who is ſenſible that their ignorance of their particular circumſtances was owing to their general knowlege of them; that is, their general knowlege, that matters were not well with them, prevented their looking into particulars. There is ſomewhat of the like kind with this in reſpect to morals, virtue, and religion. Men find that the ſurvey of themſelves, their own heart and temper, their own life and behaviour, doth not afford them ſatisfaction: things are not as they ſhould be: therefor they turn away, will not go over particulars, or look deeper, leſt they ſhould find more amiſs. For who would chuſe to be put out of humour with himſelf? No one ſurely, if it were not in order to mend, and to be

more thoroughly and better pleaſed with himſelf for the future.

If this ſincere ſelf-enjoyment and home-ſatisfaction be thought deſirable, and worth ſome pains and diligence; the following reflections will, I ſuppoſe, deſerve your attention; as what may be of ſervice and aſſiſtance to all who are in any meaſure honeſtly diſpoſed, for avoiding that fatal ſelf-deceit, and towards getting acquainted with themſelves.

The *firſt* is, that thoſe who have never had any ſuſpicion of, who have never made allowances for this weakneſs in themſelves, who have never (if I may be allowed ſuch a manner of ſpeaking,) caught themſelves in it, may almoſt take for granted that they have been very much miſled by it. For conſider: nothing is more manifeſt, than that affection and paſſion of all kinds influence the judgment. Now as we have naturally a greater regard to ourſelves than to others, as the private affection is more prevalent than the public; the former will have proportionally a greater influence upon the judgment, upon our way of conſidering things. People are not backward in owning

this partiality of judgment, in cases of friendſhip and natural relation. The reaſon is obvious, why it is not ſo readily acknowleged, when the intereſt which miſleads us is more confined, confined to ourſelves: but we all take notice of it in each other in theſe caſes. There is not any obſervation more common, than that there is no judging of a matter from hearing only one ſide. This is not founded upon ſuppoſition, at leaſt it is not always, of a formed deſign in the relater to deceive: for it holds in caſes, where he expects that the whole will be told over again by the other ſide. But the ſuppoſition, which this obſervation is founded upon, is the very thing now before us; namely, that men are exceedingly prone to deceive themſelves, and judge too favourably in every reſpect, where themſelves, and their own intereſt are concerned. Thus, tho' we have not the leaſt reaſon to ſuſpect that ſuch an intereſted perſon hath any intention to deceive us, yet we of courſe make great allowances for his having deceived himſelf. If this be general, almoſt univerſal, it is prodigious that every man can think himſelf an

exception, and that he is free from this ſelf-partiality. The direct contrary is the truth. Every man may take for granted that he has a great deal of it, till from the ſtricteſt obſervation upon himſelf, he finds particular reaſon to think otherwiſe.

Secondly, THERE is one eaſy and almoſt ſure way to avoid being miſled by this ſelf-partiality, and to get acquainted with our real character: to have regard to the ſuſpicious part of it, and keep a ſteady eye over ourſelves in that reſpect. Suppoſe then a man fully ſatisfied with himſelf, and his own behaviour; ſuch an one, if you pleaſe, as the Phariſee in the goſpel, or a better man—Well, but allowing this good opinion you have of yourſelf to be true, yet every one is liable to be miſrepreſented. Suppoſe then an enemy were to ſet about defaming you, what part of your character would he ſingle out? What particular ſcandal, think you, would he be moſt likely to fix upon you? And what would the world be moſt ready to believe? There is ſcarce a man living but could, from the moſt tranſient ſu-

perficial view of himſelf, anſwer this queſtion. What is that ill thing, that faulty behaviour, which I am apprehenſive an enemy, who was thoroughly acquainted with me, would be moſt likely to lay to my charge, and which the world would be moſt apt to believe? It is indeed poſſible that a man may not be guilty in that reſpect. All that I ſay is, let him in plainneſs and honeſty fix upon that part of his character for a particular ſurvey and reflection; and by this he will come to be acquainted, whether he is guilty or innocent in that reſpect, and how far he is one or the other.

Thirdly, It would very much prevent our being miſled by this ſelf-partiality, to reduce that practical rule of our Saviour, *Whatſoever ye would that men ſhould do to you, even ſo do unto them*, to our judgment, and way of thinking. This rule, you ſee, conſiſts of two parts. One is, to ſubſtitute another for yourſelf, when you take a ſurvey of any part of your behaviour, or conſider what is proper and fit and reaſonable for you to do upon any occaſion: the other part is, that you ſubſtitute yourſelf in the room of another; conſider yourſelf as

the perſon affected by ſuch a behaviour, or towards whom ſuch an action is done: and then you would not only ſee, but likewiſe feel, the reaſonableneſs or unreaſonableneſs of ſuch an action or behaviour. But alas, the rule itſelf may be diſhoneſtly applied: there are perſons, who have not impartiality with reſpect to themſelves, nor regard enough for others, to be able to make a juſt application of it. This juſt application, if men would honeſtly make it, is in effect all that I have been recommending; it is the whole thing, the direct contrary to that inward diſhoneſty as reſpecting our intercourſe with our fellow-creatures. And even the bearing this rule in their thoughts, may be of ſome ſervice; the attempt thus to apply it, is an attempt towards being fair and impartial, and may chance unawares to ſhew them to themſelves, to ſhew them the truth of the caſe they are conſidering.

Upon the whole it is manifeſt, that there is ſuch a thing as this ſelf-partiality and ſelf-deceit: that in ſome perſons it is to a degree which would be thought incredible, were not the inſtances before our eyes; of which the

behaviour of David is perhaps the higheſt poſſible one, in a ſingular particular caſe; for there is not the leaſt appearance, that it reached his general character: that we are almoſt all of us influenced by it in ſome degree, and in ſome reſpects: that therefor every one ought to have an eye to and beware of it. And all that I have further to add upon this ſubject is, that either there is a difference between right and wrong, or there is not: religion is true, or it is not. If it be not, there is no reaſon for any concern about it: but if it be true, it requires real fairneſs of mind and honeſty of heart. And, if people will be wicked, they had better of the two be ſo from the common vitious paſſions without ſuch refinements, than from this deep and calm ſource of deluſion; which undermines the whole principle of good; darkens that light, that *candle of the Lord within*, which is to direct our ſteps; and corrupts conſcience, which is the guide of life.

The End of the firſt Volume.

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